

*John [unclear]*

A HISTORY OF THE

# A HISTORY OF KASHMIR

POLITICAL ★ SOCIAL ★ CULTURAL  
FROM THE EARLIEST TIMES TO THE PRESENT DAY

BY  
PRITHIVI NATH KAUL BAMZAI

INTRODUCTION BY  
JAWAHARLAL NEHRU



Metropolitan Book Co. (Pvt.) Ltd.  
NEW DELHI-6



Published by  
BRAHAM VIRA GUPTA, Managing Director  
Metropolitan Book Co. (Pvt) Ltd.  
1, Netaji Subhash Road, Delhi-6

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First Edition, 1962

Second Revised Edition, 1973

Printed by  
Prem Parkash at Shiv Narain Printers, 11186-A, Doriwalan, Delhi-5

TO THE MEMORY OF  
MY FATHER  
PANDIT ANAND KOUL  
WHO INTRODUCED ME TO  
KASHMIR AND ITS CULTURAL HERITAGE





## INTRODUCTION

THIS BOOK is a welcome addition to the long story of Kashmir. There are, I believe, some old histories of Kashmir written in the Persian language, and there is the famous *Rajatarangini* written in Sanskrit eight hundred years ago and brought up-to-date from time to time. The *Rajatarangini*, in fact, is supposed to be the only history as such in Sanskrit. This fairly comprehensive history of Shri P.N.K. Bamzai is, therefore, so far as I know, the only book of the kind and it is to be welcomed.

Apart from the story of kings and rulers, it gives some account of the social, economic and cultural elements in the history of Kashmir. It brings out a peculiar feature of the Kashmiris and how their mixed culture took shape. About two thousand years or more ago, Kashmir was a great Buddhist centre and some of the famous Buddhist councils were held there. From then onwards it continued to be one of the principal centres of Sanskrit learning. Nearly a thousand years ago, Arab and Persian influences first affected Kashmir and later, under Muslim rule, Persian became the recognised official language. Thus Kashmir experienced successively and some times together Buddhist, Hindu and Muslim influences, creating a mixed but harmonised culture which is so evident even today in Kashmir.

All over India something of this kind took place in varying degrees, more in the north than in the south. Thus we find this mixture of various cultures growing up in different parts of India in varying degrees. In Kashmir, however, this process went much further and resulted in blending these cultures effectively. The conflicts between the



religions and cultures there were less marked, and the people of Kashmir broadly accepted all of them and thus created a blended cultural atmosphere which was peculiar to Kashmir. Shri Bamzai's history brings this out and shows the influence of Islam on Hinduism and of Hinduism on Islam. This blending resulted in a relative absence of communal feeling. In fact, the special characteristic of the Kashmiris was that of tolerance. Kashmir thus became, even more so than the rest of India, a laboratory for this process of the blending of cultures. Linguistically Kashmir was for long a home of Sanskrit learning and later became a centre of the Persian language also. Out of this mixture grew the present Kashmiri language.

Women in Kashmir have played a notable part in its history. Broadly speaking, women had greater rights there than in other parts of India.

Because of the beauty of nature in the valley and other parts of Kashmir perhaps, a special characteristic of the Kashmiris has always been a love of nature. Even now large numbers of the people go, whenever they have a chance, to the Mughal Gardens to sit there sipping their tea made from *samovars* that they carry with them and enjoy the beautiful flowers and trees there. Kashmiri poetry is full of nature's beauties and a certain pride in living in this delectable area.

The Mughal emperors were, as is well known, powerfully attracted to Kashmir and its beauty. Jehangir said that "Kashmir is a garden of eternal Spring". The fame of Kashmir thus spread to Europe and other parts of the world both for its charm of nature and its lovely handicrafts.

But nature's beauties exist in many places and are often ignored. In Kashmir they were appreciated by the



common people and not only by the rulers and the like, and the beautiful handicrafts were produced by the men and women of Kashmir. The influence of these two factors in addition to the blended and harmonised culture that grew up there led to the people being generally tolerant and free from communal conflict.

We must keep in mind these influences which have gone to mould the Kashmiri people and which explain, to some extent, its subsequent history and even more especially happenings in recent times. Kashmir was less affected by communal bigotry than most parts of India. Even when, after the Partition of India, terrible occurrences took place in northern India, Kashmir was by and large free from any major conflict.

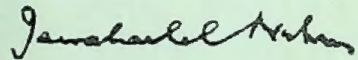
I am glad that Shri Bamzai has written in some detail about the events which took place in Kashmir's struggle for freedom and in the wake of the Partition of India. This makes us understand that the refusal of the people of Kashmir to accept the so-called two-nation theory was not a mere political development but had its roots in their long past and the culture they had developed.

Kashmiris are known to be intelligent ; they do very well in examinations. Their artisans are hard-working and have a sense of art and beauty. They love song and music. Perhaps because of these civilized traits they grew soft and other failings grew among them. They were not at all war-like and were thus very different from some of their neighbours. They liked a soft and quiet life. Perhaps it was this softness that attracted adventurous people from outside and ultimately led to the troubles that followed the Partition of India. That shock has had a powerful influence on them and has been an additional factor in moulding them.



Kashmir has been very much in the news in the last few years and many people talk of it as if it was just a piece of territory over which there is a conflict and lengthy arguments take place in the Security Council of the United Nations. But behind all these arguments lie the people of Kashmir, an attractive people in many ways who want to live their own lives and, now that they have tasted freedom, to progress according to their own ways and maintain the blended culture which has been their hall-mark, whether they are Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs.

This book gives some idea of this background and I hope many people will read it and thus begin to understand something that lies behind the controversies relating to Kashmir.



Jawaharlal Nehru

New Delhi,  
October 8, 1962

## PREFACE

Significant events concerning Kashmir have occurred since the first appearance of this book a decade ago. Apart from the Chinese aggression on India in Ladakh and NEFA, there were the two Indo-Pakistan wars in 1965 and 1971.

The appreciation which the book received from critics and historians has encouraged me to bring out its second edition. It has been thoroughly revised and covers all the important events up to the day on which the instruments of ratification of the Simla Agreement were exchanged between India and Pakistan.

Kashmir continues to be a tender spot for both India and Pakistan. After the emergence of Bangladesh as a free and sovereign State, the final settlement of the Kashmir question assumes vital importance for the establishment of a durable peace in the sub-continent.

To understand and form a balanced view of this vexed and confusing problem, it is essential to have a historical perspective of the question—its genesis, development and the power politics in which it is hemmed. This book attempts to provide such a view-point and may hence prove useful.

P. N. K. Bamzai





## PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION

THE NUMBER of books on Kashmir is legion. Most of them, however, describe and paint with the pen the beauty of the 'Paradise on Earth', its lovely meadows, rivers and lakes, its shady chenars and tall, slender poplars, its snow-capped mountains which change their hue with every change in hour and season. But apart from a sketch here and there of those with whom the authors came in contact while on holiday in, or political mission to, Kashmir, these books devote practically no attention to the people who inhabit this beautiful land.

But it is the people with their ancient history who are more interesting than the charming landscape across which they pass to and fro. From the earliest times they have passed through days of joy and sorrow, affluence and penury ; they have been subjected to political and cultural influences from the South and the North, and assimilating the best from both, have produced in their persons a broad-based resultant which is reflected in their language, religious belief and social customs.

The history of Kashmir is the story of a living people with their hopes and fears. Their ancestors had the wisdom and foresight to record the events of their land from ancient times. Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, the only historical work in Sanskrit, and its later continuations, were followed by histories written in Persian. But all these are a record of the 'River of Kings'. It is only by patient research that some facts about the social and cultural life of the people can be gleaned from their pages.

The object of writing this book has been to give a connected and running story of the people of the State—their life and culture as it developed during the course of the centuries. Scantiness of material for writing a comprehensive history made the work all the more difficult.

The discussions in the Security Council for the past fifteen years and the recent India-China border dispute, have given to Kashmir international importance. To understand the situation, it is necessary to have a knowledge of its historical background which, for instance, explains the broad and humanistic outlook on life and a strong belief in secularism that a Kashmiri has and which in turn determine his approach to all political and social problems.

I am conscious of the literary and other shortcomings of the book. If, in spite of this, it helps to create in the reader an interest in Kashmir and its people, and in understanding the problems that face the State, I will consider my labour as amply rewarded.

I am grateful to Shri Jawaharlal Nehru, Prime Minister of India, for finding the time in the midst of his numerous preoccupations, to



read the book and for contributing the Introduction which crystalises its basic theme. The trouble that Shri Nehru has taken and the illuminating Introduction he has written, have heartened me in the belief that the task I endeavoured to solve was more than worth the labour that it entailed.

The idea about writing a running and comprehensive history of Kashmir first emanated from my father, Pandit Anand Koul. A devoted student of Kashmir's history, art and folk-lore, he recognised early the importance of such a work to the study of the history of India. It was a privilege for me to have drawn freely upon his knowledge of Kashmir's past and present and this more than anything else, has contributed to the completion of the present work. His own publications are enough to perpetuate his memory, but I may here at least dedicate this volume to his memory as a token of filial love and reverence.

The task he had indicated was, however, so ambitious and of such considerable difficulty that it would have remained with me a dream unfulfilled, had not my friend, Shri Janki Nath Zutshi, Director of Information, Jammu and Kashmir Government, induced me to undertake the work and secured for me several facilities, the most important being the permission to have access to and study the political records of the last hundred years lying in the State Archives. For this and for his helpful suggestions, I am deeply indebted to him.

I am also thankful to my friend and colleague, Shri Vivekranjan Bhattacharya, for his invaluable suggestions and help. He ungrudgingly rendered all assistance I required in the preparation of the book.

To Shri Om Prakash Aggarwala, Chairman, and Shri Brahma Vira Gupta, Director, of Messrs. Metropolitan Book Co. (Private) Ltd., I owe a deep debt of gratitude for their unstinted help and patience, without which the book may not have seen the light of the day. I am thankful to Shri Satya Prakash Gupta, Executive Director, and Shri Kidar Nath, of the Navin Press for their co-operation in the printing of the book.

I must express my thanks to Shri Soom Nath Sadhu for the pains he has taken in preparing an exhaustive index which will, I am sure, be of help to the reader.

My thanks are due to the Director-General, Archaeological Survey of India, for permission to publish the photographs of Burzahom excavations, and to the Director, Publications Division, Government of India, for the black-and-white and colour plates.

P.N.K.B.

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PART ONE

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ANCIENT KASHMIR

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●  
THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

EARLY HISTORY AND RISE OF  
NORTHERN BUDDHISM

IMPERIAL KARKOTAS AND  
LATER HINDU RULERS  
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## CHAPTER ONE

### THE LAND AND THE PEOPLE

✓ PROJECTING DEEP into the heart of Asia, Jammu and Kashmir, a component State of the Indian Union, covers an area of 86,023 square miles extending from  $32^{\circ} 17'$  to  $36^{\circ} 58'$  N. and from  $73^{\circ} 26'$  to  $80^{\circ} 30'$  E. Conveniently called by the shorter term 'Kashmir', the State includes besides the Valley, the areas of Jammu, Ladakh, Baltistan, Gilgit, Hunza and Nagar.

With its 4,615,176 inhabitants, it has the lowest density of population in India. For, unlike the vast plains of the rest of the country, Kashmir is mostly mountainous, rising in several tiers from the plains in the south to the high-altitude valleys and peaks in the north enclosing some of the loftiest inhabited hamlets in the world. Obviously with such diversities of physical features, the State offers interesting variations in its soil, elevation, geological formation, climate, vegetation and the people. This diversity in aspect apart from having influenced and largely shaped the history of the State, is in itself an interesting study.

By virtue of its central position in Asia, Kashmir commands a strategic importance touching as it does the borders of Pakistan, Russia and China. It stands on the old Central Asian trade route and the Kashmir Valley has, since ancient times, been the halting place of the caravans travelling between the plains of India and Central Asia.

A detailed description of its geography is necessary to elucidate the pronounced variations found in the different aspects of the State. It begins from the strip of level land at the northern-most extremity of the plains of the Punjab. This strip has the same geographical features as the Punjab whence it continues. It does not extend long and the low ridges of the hills begin soon. These hills, spread over a large tract, constitute what is called the 'Region of the Outer Hills' or the 'sub-montane tract.' The hills run parallel to one another and vary in height from 2,000 to 4,000 feet above sea level. In between these rocky and rugged hills lie small narrow valleys.

In the east of this region flows the river Ravi and to its west the river Jhelum. Jammu, the winter capital of the State, stands on the spur of a hill overlooking the picturesque small Tawi river. Both the Tawi and the Ujh, another small river flowing nearby, are chiefly dependent on rain which often floods them during the monsoons. The Chenab



issues from the mountains into the plains near the town of Akhnur, 18 miles to the north-west of Jammu and flows through parts of the Jammu district before entering the plains of the Punjab.

The Jammu district embraces the largest slice of this region and next to it in area is Mirpur. Jammu city is about 1,030 feet high from the sea and spreads over more than a mile. The prominent features of the city are its temples with pointed spires, and the imposing palace.

There are several towns in this region the important being Basohli, Ramkot, Ramnagar to the east of the Chenab and Akhnur and Bhimber to its west. Bhimber was once an important stage on the great Mughal road to Kashmir. A rest house was built there by the Mughals who halted at the place while on their way to the Valley. Rajauri was another stage on the road to Kashmir and a rest house was built there also. Akhnur is a flourishing town situated close by the river Chenab and commands commercial importance owing to the navigability of the river there.

This region experiences tropical heat. The hot season lasts from April to June, followed by the rainy season from July to September. The intensity of the heat during summer corresponds to that of the plains in India. Winter sets in in October and lasts up to March. The vegetation of the region is tropical. The produce of these districts varies according to their altitude. Thus below 2,000 feet grow the crops as in the Punjab, such as sugarcane and plantain. Cotton thrives and on the sides of the hills maize, wheat and barley are extensively cultivated. The upper reaches of the hills are thickly covered with forests of pine and deodar. Lack of water is, however, responsible for frequent crop failures. Canals which have recently been built are fed by the Chenab and the Tawi. This region is rich in minerals. Coal fields have been discovered and the recent finds of aluminium, copper, zinc and lead ores and bauxite raise hopes of this region becoming the industrial belt of the State.

#### REGION OF THE 'MIDDLE MOUNTAINS'

The next natural division of the State lies between the 'Outer Hills' in the south to the lofty mountain ranges dividing the Kashmir Valley from Jammu. Aptly called the 'Middle Mountains' the elevation of this tract ranges from 4,000 to 12,000 feet above the sea. It comprises the valleys of Bhadrwah, Kishtwar and Padar. There is a luxuriant growth of vegetation all over this area. The forests are rich with silver fir, deodar, spruce, oak, and pine. The lower parts are cultivated wherever possible. The main crops grown are maize, rice, millet, barley and wheat. Cultivation in this area is dependent on rain which however is not enough for growing rice. Irrigational

facilities are now being extended to this part of the State. Unlike the 'Outer Hills' snow falls and on higher elevations it stays long.

Among the valleys enclosed by these mountains, Bhadrwah is a place of interest. It stands at an elevation of nearly 5,400 feet above sea level. Its main charm lies in the rich forests abounding in the finest quality of timber. The town is always humming with lumbering activities. Delicious fruit such as apple, pear, mulberry, apricot and cherry are grown.

Another town of importance is Kishtwar. It is more or less a plateau, about 5,400 feet above the sea. The mountains are coated with forests of deodar, fir and oak which lend charm and majesty to it. The climate is quite pleasant and refreshing. Flowers and plants grow in wild profusion. There are numerous waterfalls whose 'aggregate height' is estimated to be over 2,500 feet providing a huge power potential. Fruit such as quince, apple, pear, plum, cherry and grapes grow here. Saffron is also cultivated but it is inferior in quality to that grown at Pampur in the Kashmir Valley.

Padar is a small valley of the Chenab not far from Kishtwar. The valley is rich in minerals. Sapphire mines are located at higher elevations. Other semi-precious stones like beryl and aquamarine and crystals like quartz and felspar are also to be found.

From the 'Middle Mountains' onwards one comes to the region of lofty mountains which enclose the basin-shaped valley of Kashmir. The broad outline of the mountain ranges of this most picturesque part of the State commence from the Pir Panjal range in the south and southwest of the Valley, varying in height from 8,000 to 15,000 feet. There are peaks on this range which rise to elevations of from 12,800 feet (Kaunsar Nag) to 15,524 feet (Tratakoti) and the highest is that of Romesh Thong, called also the Sunset Peak.

#### KASHMIR VALLEY

The celebrated Valley of Kashmir, nestled securely among the Himalayas at an average height of 6,000 feet above the sea, is approximately 84 miles in length and 20 to 25 miles in breadth. North, east and west, range after range of mountains guard the Valley from the outer world and in the south it is cut off from the Punjab by rocky barriers, 50 to 75 miles in width. The mountain snows feed the river Jhelum and the streams and it is calculated that the Jhelum in its course through the Valley has a catchment area of nearly 4,000 square miles.

#### ORIGIN

There is a legend that the Kashmir Valley was aeons ago, a vast mountain lake called Satisar and geologists attest to this. That volcanic

action had some share either in the formation of the original lake or its subsequent desiccation, is most probable and is to be traced in the mountains around the vale. The soil contains remains of fresh-water fish and fossil oysters—the black shells of the water-chestnut may be found in layers embedded in the earth at a height of 1,500 feet above the level of the Valley. These indicate a fluvial origin. Traces of beaches may also be seen on the sides of the mountains. The flat and uniformly even surface of *karewas* or plateaus can only be attributed to their having remained submerged for ages beneath the still, calm waters of a deep vast lake.

According to a tradition the drainer of this lake was an ascetic named Kashyapa; hence the reclaimed land was called Kashyap-pur or Kashyap-mar and later Kashmir.

The name Kashmir also implies “land desiccated from water,” from Sanskrit *ka* water, *shimira* to desiccate.<sup>1</sup>

In Sanskrit *Puranas*, Kashmir is called Gerek (hill) nestled as it is in hills. In Chapter VIII of *Avanadikosha*, the meaning of the word Kashmir is given “land, ruling in which is difficult.”

The ancient Greeks called it Kaspeiria,<sup>2</sup> and in the classical literature Herodotus mentions it as Kaspattyros, and Hekataios calls it by the name of Kaspalyros or Kaspapyros. It is called Shie-mi in the narrative of To Yeng and Sung Yan (578 A.D.). Heun Tsiang who visited Kashmir in 631 A.D. calls it *Kia-shi-mi-lo*.

Kashmir has further been shortened into Kashir by the Kashmiris in their own tongue. The Tibetans call it Khachal (snowy mountain), and the Dards, Kashrat.

#### A MOUNTAIN-GIRT VALLEY

The mountains which surround Kashmir are infinitely varied in form and colour. To the north lies a veritable sea of mountains broken into white-crested waves hastening away in wild confusion to the great promontory of Nanga Parbat (26, 182 feet). To the east stands Haramukh (16, 903 feet), the grim mountain which guards the valley of the Sindh. Further south is Mahadeo, sacred to the Hindus, which seems almost to look down upon Srinagar, the lofty ranges of Gwash Brari (17, 800 feet) and the peak of Amarnath (17,321 feet). On the south is the Panjal range with peaks of 15,000 feet. Further north are the great rolling downs of the Tosamaidan (14,000 feet), and in the

<sup>1</sup> Pandit Anand Koul, *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 79.

<sup>2</sup> A third fragment in Ptolemy (VII, 42) gives Kaspeiria as one of two provinces in Menander's home kingdom east of the Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi which would correspond to Southern Kashmir. See Tarn, *The Geeks in India and Bactria*, p. 238.





Dual play of lake and mountain.  
Sheshnag lake (Ht. 4,200 metres)  
on the way to Amar Nath cave.



Gulmarg, the famous health resort

north-west corner rises the Kajinag (12,125 feet), the home of the Markhor.

Where the mountains cease to be steep, fan-like projections with flat arid tops bare of trees run out towards the Valley. These plateaus are known as *karewas*. Sometimes they stand up isolated in the middle of the Valley, but whether isolated or attached to the mountains, the *karewas* present the same sterile appearance and offer the same abrupt walls to the Valley.

Kashmir is a land of lakes, rivers and flowers. For its fresh-water lakes and tarns, the country is celebrated all the world over. Those lying in the Valley against the charming mountain background are the Wular, the Dal and the Manasbal. The Wular lying in the north-east of the Valley is the largest fresh-water lake in India. It is  $12\frac{1}{2}$  miles long and 5 miles broad. The Dal lake lies at the foot of hills to the east of Srinagar and is four miles long and nearly two miles broad. Against the mountain background which is reflected in its calm expanse, and enclosed by trees, the lake looks superb. The Manasbal lake is the deepest, its greenish-blue waters reflecting the hills which surround it.

Besides these lakes which are fed by the springs and melting snow streams trickling down the mountains, there are a number of tarns formed by glacial action.<sup>1</sup>

The lakes and lakelets found in the upper valleys around Haramukh are Gangabal, Lool Gool and Sarbal. They are at an elevation of nearly 12,000 feet above sea level. Gangabal lake with its shimmering waters is held sacred by the Hindus of Kashmir.

To the south-east of the Pir Panjal range lies the lovely lake of Kaunsar Nag (12,800 feet) fed by a glacier and surrounded by three peaks. It is said to be a source of the Jhelum river.

In the Lidder valley there are large glaciers like Kolahoi which is about five miles in length and comes down as low as 11,000 feet. From here to the east on the way to the Amarnath cave lies the Sheshnag at an elevation of 14,000 feet.

Thus we see the Valley as a happy combination of mountains and lakes. There are numerous springs swarming with Himalayan trout

1 Dr Arthur Neve who made close, on-the-spot observation on various mountain ranges states :

"On the south side of Haramukh the glaciers only descend to about 13,500 ft. but on the north 1,500 feet lower. They are fed by the large snow fields on the summit, which are of great thickness. The snow cliffs on the middle peak show a vertical thickness of nearly 200 feet. In all the surrounding valleys there are lakelets varying in size from mere ponds to sheets of water a mile or so in length and a quarter of a mile broad. Most of these occur at a height of about 11,500 feet. There can be no doubt that they are all due in some way to glacial action and that they are of not very remote age."



and associated with the old snake worship which gives them sanctity.

No description of the Valley would be complete without a mention of its useful river, the Jhelum, which, rising at Verinag in the south and traversing the entire length of the Valley, escapes at Baramula as a roaring, foaming torrent. The Jhelum, known in the Valley as Vitasta, is its very life, supplying water to its fields. The river is navigable without a single lock from Khanabal to Baramula, over a course of 102 miles and with its numerous canals and tributaries serves as a cheap means of transport through flat-bottomed boats ranging from the tiny *shikara* to a huge *bahats* (cargo boat).

#### FLOODS, FAMINES AND FIRES

Surrounded as it is by high mountains which accumulate on their higher reaches huge deposits of snow during winter, when the western monsoons are active, the Valley is liable to be inundated in summer when rain brings down melted snow in torrents, quickly filling low lying parts of the bowl-shaped Valley. The catchment area has been calculated to be 116 miles long with a width that varies from 40 to 75 miles.

The only outlet for this is the narrow gorge at Baramula where the placid Jhelum leaves the smooth grassy banks and hurries headlong down its rocky course to the plains of the Punjab. This vulnerability to floods has been a major factor affecting the economy of the Valley and we find, in its long history, accounts of several floods which wrought havoc, destroying life and crops. Famines invariably followed and owing to the isolated nature of the Valley were often very deadly and prolonged.

Two other factors directly attributable to the physical formation of the Valley, namely earthquakes and fires, are also responsible for having caused repeated misery to its inhabitants.

There are several tracts of alluvium torrefied up to the surface to the condition of a well-burnt brick, which point to some form of igneous or volcanic action. The desiccation of the Valley is believed to have been caused by an earthquake which created an outlet for the lake waters through the Baramula gorge.<sup>1</sup>

No wonder that lurid accounts of earthquakes which caused enormous destruction of life and property fill several pages of the long history of Kashmir. These had far-reaching repercussions on the political, economic and social growth of the people.

Frequency of earthquakes necessitates the extensive use of timber in the construction of houses. Thanks to rich forests of deodar, pine

<sup>1</sup> W.R. Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 42-43.

and fir all over the Valley, timber is cheap and easily procurable. Constructed with this combustible material, houses catch fire quickly and history records several conflagrations which reduced whole towns and cities to ashes.

Srinagar, the capital of the State, situated in the centre of the Valley, stands on the banks of the Vitasta. One of the oldest cities in India, its history dates back to the time of Ashoka who is credited with having founded it during his visit to Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> Srinagar with its numerous canals and the adjacent Dal Lake is aptly called the 'Venice of the East' and is a centre of trade and commerce.

Baramula towards the north-west of the Valley is a town of importance. It is here that the Vitasta after running a course of calm and navigable length in the Valley escapes as a rushing, foaming, torrent. Near Baramula is another town, Sopore, originally founded in the 9th century A.D. It is a centre of wool industry and fruit. In the south of the Valley is the famous town of Anantnag. With its numerous springs, some of which have medicinal properties, Anantnag presents a picturesque look. Shopyan the starting point of the old Mughal Road over the Pir Panjal range is famous as a centre of fruit trade.

The major occupation of the people is agriculture. Rice, wheat, barley and fruits are cultivated. Handicrafts and manufacture of woollens give employment to a fair proportion of the people who are known all the world over as the finest handicraftsmen of the East. The floral and faunal designs worked on shawls, carpets and papier mache articles are the direct result of the beautiful surroundings in which the workers live.

#### LADAKH AND GILGIT

Beyond the Valley are Ladakh, 'the land of the Lamas', Baltistan and Dardistan. The whole region is mountainous. It is here that arctic cold is experienced. The population is sparse owing to the extreme climate and low production. The region is cut off by mountain barriers from other parts of the State and the communications till the other day were primitive and difficult.

Ladakh lies to the east of Kashmir Valley. The elevation of this part of the State varies from 8,000 to 15,000 feet above the sea. The mountains vary in height from 17,000 to 25,000 feet. The Karakoram ranges form the northern boundary of Ladakh. To the south lies the Ladakh range and further south the Zaskar range, the two being cut by the river Indus.

Between the various streams which drain the area rise ranges of mountains, those in the central portions attaining an elevation of

<sup>1</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, i-104.

16,000 to 20,000 feet, while the mighty flanking masses of the Karakoram culminate in the great peak Godwin Austen (28,265 feet). The difference of the level in the valleys between the eastern and western tracts has its natural effect on the scenery. In the east, as in the Rupshu district of Ladakh, the lowest ground is 13,500 feet above the sea, while the mountains run very evenly to a height of 20,000 or 21,000 feet. The result is a series of long open valleys, bounded by comparatively low hills having very little of the characteristics of what is generally termed a mountainous country. To the west as the valleys deepen, while the bordering mountains keep at much the same elevation, the character of the country changes, and assumes the more familiar Himalayan look of massive ridges and spurs falling steeply into the deep valleys below.

The climate of Ladakh is rigorous. Nights are very cold and the days very hot. The position of mountains is quite opposite to the direction of winds and hence no rain falls. There is very little snow on the mountains. Ladakhis mainly cultivate land in the valleys where it is fertile and irrigation is easy due to the river. Crops such as barley, wheat, buckwheat, peas, *grim*, rapeseed, beans and turnips are grown here. Apples and apricots flourish in some parts of the region.

Leh is the capital of Ladakh. It is an important centre of trade as the caravan traders of Central Asia and of India meet here and exchange their commodities.

The Indus valley, known as Baltistan, covers an area of 6,522 square miles. It is bounded on the north by the Karakoram mountains, on the east by Ladakh, on the south by the Himalayas and on the west by Dardistan. There are very high mountains and side valleys in this part of the country. The valley of Shayok and the *illagas* of Shigar and Skardu are well populated. Its sub-divisions are Khar-mang, Khaplu, Shigar, Skardu and Rondu. Shigar is a fertile part of the country. Khaplu is situated in the southern valley of the Shayok.

There is very little cultivable land here but fruits are sweet, specially grapes, melons and apricots. Caraway seeds are plentiful. The river Indus is crossed here in boats called *zak* made of inflated hides, but where it is narrow it is crossed by rope bridges. It is picturesque like other Himalayan valleys in respect of natural surroundings, except for the climate which is cold and rigorous in winter, hot and dry in summer. The snowfall is not heavy as it is in the Kashmir Valley. In summer, days are hot and nights cold. The mountains which range on its north and east are among the loftiest in the world. There are several hot springs and also several glaciers of which Baltoru is, except the ice-bound oceans of Arctic regions, the largest in the world.

Skardu is the capital town of Baltistan. Usually the whole area is



called after the name of this town. The river Indus flows right through it and Skardu town stands on its banks at an elevation of 7,700 ft. above the sea.

Dardistan extends in the north to the Karakoram and besides Gilgit, comprises Hunza, Nagar and the small principalities of Chilas, Yasin, Punial, Ghizar, Ishkoman and Koh. Chitral was a tributary of the erstwhile princely State of Jammu and Kashmir.

Gilgit is 223 miles from Srinagar by road over the Burzil pass above the northern bank of the Wular lake. Descending from the Burzil the whole scene changes. The forests and vegetation of Kashmir are left behind, the trees are few and of a strange appearance, and the very flowers look foreign. It is bleak and rugged country, and when Astor (7,853 feet) is left the sense of desolation increases. Nothing can be more dreary than the steep descent from Doian down the side of the arid Hattu Pir into the sterile waste of the Indus valley. It is cool at Doian (8,720 feet) ; it is stifling at Ramghat (3,800 feet), where one passes over the Astor river by a suspension bridge. A little cultivation at Bunji relieves the eye ; but there is nothing to cheer the traveller until the Indus has been crossed and 30 miles farther the pleasant oasis of Gilgit is reached.

The Indus valley is a barren, dewless country. The very river with its black water looks hot, and the great mountains are destitute of vegetation. The only thing of beauty is the view of the snowy ranges, and Nanga Parbat in the rising sun seen from the crossing of the Indus river to Gilgit sweeps into oblivion the dreadful desert of sand and rock. Gilgit (4,890 feet) itself is fertile and well watered. The mountains fall back from the river, and leave room for cultivation on the alluvial land bordering the right bank of the Gilgit river, a rare feature in these northern highlands.<sup>1</sup>

The Karakoram range is of a far more complicated character. Broadly speaking, it is a continuation of the Hindukush, and forms the watershed between the Central Asian drainage and the streams flowing into the Indian Ocean. From its main ridge, lofty spurs extend into Kashmir, separating the various tributaries of the Indus. The result is a stupendous mountain mass 220 miles long, with a width on the south side of the watershed of 30 to 60 miles, and peaks averaging from 21,000 to 23,000 feet. These culminate on the west in the well-known Rakaposhi mountain, north of Gilgit over 25,500 feet high, and in the mighty group of peaks round the head of the Baltoru glacier dominated by the second highest mountain peak in the world, Godwin Austen, whose summit is 28,265 feet above the sea.

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1 *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XV, New Edition (1908), p. 78.

The head of every valley in the area is the birthplace of a glacier. Many of these are immense in size, such as the Baltorū, the Biafo and the Hispar.

A description of this mountainous region would be incomplete without a reference to the vast elevated plains of Lingzhithang, which lie at the extreme north-eastern border of Kashmir. The ground level of these plains is from 16,000 to 17,000 feet above the sea and such rain as falls drains into a series of salt lakes. Of vegetation there is little or none, the country being a desolate expanse of earth and rock.<sup>1</sup>

### ROUTES

None of the natural features of Kashmir geography have had a more direct bearing on its history than the great mountain-barriers that surround it.

The importance of the mountains as the protecting wall of the Valley has at all times been recognised both by the inhabitants and foreign observers. We find it alluded to by Kalhana who speaks of Kashmir as unconquerable by the force of soldiers, and of the protection afforded by its mountain walls.<sup>2</sup> Special notice has been taken by Heun Tsiang<sup>3</sup> and Ou-kong of the mountains, enclosing the kingdom and the difficulty of the passes leading through them. Alberuni does the same and shows us the anxious care taken in old days to maintain this natural strength by keeping strict watch over the passes.<sup>4</sup> Sharaf-ud-din, the historian of Timur, says of Kashmir : "This country is protected naturally by its mountains on every side, so that the inhabitants, without the trouble of fortifying themselves, are safe from the attacks of enemies."<sup>5</sup>

Road communications between the component parts of the State and with the rest of the country were quite primitive and restricted. Till as late as the beginning of the present century, wheeled traffic was non-existent in the Valley.<sup>6</sup> Long distances and difficulties of terrain were, however, no bar to free movement and constant travels of the people over the Himalayas for they had, by sheer economic pressure, to maintain the life lines of commerce. Alberuni mentions that Kashmiris had abroad the reputation of being good pedestrians. It is natural that the inhabitants of an alpine country, enclosed by difficult mountains

1 *Ibid.*, p. 84.

2 *Rajatarangini*, i—31-39.

3 See *Si-u-ki*, trans. Beal, i. p. 148.

4 Alberuni's *India*, trans. Sachau, i.p. 206.

5 See the extract from Sharaf-ud-din's *Zafarnama* in *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* trans. Elias and Ross, p. 432.

6 W.R. Lawrence *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 23.

and accustomed to travel long distances, should develop marching powers.

Several routes leading out of the Valley towards the east, south and west, are mentioned in early chronicles as well as noticed by foreign travellers. These were the routes over the Zoji-la to Ladakh and thence to Central Asia and Tibet ; to Gandhara (Kabul valley) through the valley of the Jhelum, which joined the caravan route from India to Western Asia near Taxila ; and the routes over the Pir Panjal range including those over the Banihal, Pir Panjal and Tosamaidan passes to eastern and central Punjab and thence to the plains of India.

#### ROUTE TO LADAKH

The route over the Zoji-la was undoubtedly an important thoroughfare in ancient times. Caravans laden with cotton textiles, spices, and handicrafts travelled from the plains of India to Leh where they met the caravans coming from Central Asia and Tibet carrying tea, silk and shawl wool and traded them through barter and cash. Leh was thus an important centre of entrepot trade.

Ou-kong is the first who refers distinctly to this route when speaking of the road which leads through the 'gate in the east' to *Tou-fan* or Tibet.

Zoji-la has more than once witnessed successful invasions of Kashmir. Through it came, early in the fourteenth century, the Turk Dulca and Bhautta Rincana, whose usurpation led to the downfall of Hindu rule in the Valley.<sup>1</sup> About two centuries later Mirza Haider Dughlat, with his small Mughal force, successfully fought here his entrance to Kashmir (1533 A.D.)<sup>2</sup>

From Srinagar the route to Leh (243 miles) runs up the side valley of the Sindh for 64 miles and then ascends the Zoji-la (11,300 feet) on to the elevated tableland of Ladakh. For five marches the route follows the course of the Dras river through a desolate country of piled-up rocks and loose gravel. It then takes a southerly direction to Kargil, and abandoning the valley, ascends the bare mountains. Through gorges and defiles the valley of Shergol is reached from where the road runs over the Namki-la (13,000 feet) and Fotu-la (13,400 feet). Later the Indus is crossed by a bridge and the road runs along its right bank through Khalsi to Leh.

It is a long and difficult road from Leh to Yarkand, 482 miles, over the Khardung-la, the Sasser-la and the Karakoram passes of between 17,000 and 19,000 feet altitude.

1. See *Jonaraja*, 42 Sqq.

2. *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, trans. Elias and Ross, p. 423 Sqq.



The route to Tibet passes through Rudok (13,300 feet), the frontier post of Tibet, and crosses the Mariom-la (15,000 feet), the highest pass between Leh and Lhasa.

#### TO GILGIT

The route to Gilgit from Srinagar (223 miles), after passing through the lovely Gurais valley beyond Bandipore, ascends the Burzil pass. Across the pass it is a bleak and rugged country, and when Astor (7,853 feet) is left, the sense of desolation increases. There is nothing to cheer the traveller, except a view of the Nanga Parbat, till one reaches the pleasant oasis of Gilgit.

#### JHELUM VALLEY ROAD

Being the shortest line of communication between the Valley and Hazara (ancient Urusha) and the Indus, the route through the Jhelum valley below Baramula was used from ancient times. Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong coming from Gandhara (Kabul valley) and Urusha (Hazara) followed this route on their way to Kashmir, and it was well known to Alberuni.

The Jhelum valley below Baramula is confined between two ranges of mountains—the one to the south being a branch of the Pir Panjal and the other to the north, of Kajinag. These two ranges accompany the course of the river with gradually lessening height for about 80 miles to a point near Muzaffarabad where the Jhelum makes its sudden bend to the south.

The valley is throughout narrow and the route leading along it must have always been troublesome and risky in olden times. It is perhaps due to this reason that we hear comparatively little about it in the *Rajatarangini* of Kalhana.

With the dawn of the present century the Jhelum valley road was built and opened to wheeled traffic. The road was joined with the Murree road at Kohala, 132 miles from Srinagar, and became, till the opening of the Banihal road between Srinagar and Jammu some years later, the life line of the Valley. With the birth of Pakistan in 1947, and the occupation of this part of the valley by its forces, the road is blocked beyond Uri, 65 miles from Srinagar.

#### BANIHAL ROAD

Kashmir has fortunately another important road link with the rest of India. The Banihal road pierces the Banihal pass through a 2-mile tunnel at an elevation of 7,200 feet and following the valley of the Chenab ends at Jammu. The road is open all the year round, the new low-level tunnel obviating the necessity of driving over the top of the

Pass (9,000 feet) which remains snow-bound in winter. From Jammu a fine and wide road over undulating plains leads to Pathankot, the nearest railhead.

The Banihal pass, owing to its low elevation, has always been a convenient route to the upper Chenab valley and the eastern hills of the Punjab. It takes its modern name from a village at the south foot of the pass which is mentioned by Kalhana as Banasala.<sup>1</sup>

#### MUGHAL ROAD

The Pir Panjal range has several passes leading to the Punjab. In the central part of the range is a low dip (11,400 feet) known as Pir Panjal Pass. The route which crosses it has, from ancient times, been the most frequented line of communication from Kashmir to the central part of Punjab. It is often mentioned by Kalhana.

The route figures in Khsemendra's *Samayamatrika* (ii-90 sqq.) while the author describes the wanderings of the heroine, Kankali. He appropriately calls it the 'salt road' as till recent times it was the chief route by which salt from the mines in the Punjab entered Kashmir.

With minor realignments here and there the Mughal Emperors built the Imperial Road over this route. The road is described in detail by Abul Faza and later by Bernier who visited the Valley in the train of Aurangzeb.

Starting from Hurapor (ancient Surapura) in the south of the Valley, the route ascends through the valley of the Rambiar river to Aliabad Serai, the Mughal hospice. From there the road goes up a gently sloping valley westwards until, at a distance of five miles, the Pass is reached. The descent on the Jammu side is steeper. Poshiana, the next stage, which is reached by a rocky slope of the mountain, is 3,000 feet below. From here the road descends in a westerly direction along the bed of a stream till Baramgala. Here the route turns west, crossing the Rattan Pir pass (8,200 feet) over the range which is a part of Pir Panjal, and entering the region of the middle mountains descends into an open valley to Rajauri.

#### ROUTE TO POONCH

The Tosamaidan pass, being on the most direct route between the Valley and Poonch, was of special importance from ancient times. It was over this route that Heun Tsiang continued his journey to places in the rest of India after his stay of two years in the Valley. We find references to this route in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. It was twice in Kashmir's history that serious invasions were attempted over this route

<sup>1</sup> Kalhana, *Rajatarangini*, viii—1655.

in 1021 by Mahmud Ghazni and in 1814 by the forces of Ranjit Singh. Both however proved unsuccessful and the invading armies had to suffer loss and retire in utter confusion.<sup>1</sup>

The old route started from the village of Drang at the foot of the mountains 30°57' lat. 74°36' long. From here the road ascends over an easy slope to the edge of the Tosamaidan, a large upland plateau of undulating ground. After crossing the Tosamaidan, the route goes over gently sloping grassy ridges to the pass (13,000 feet). On its west it descends to the large village of Mandi and thence goes to Poonch.

### THE PEOPLE

Jammu and Kashmir state is the home of various races and sects whose history goes back thousands of years. Many are the strange and interesting customs and social usages prevailing among them and any detailed account of their history would fill a volume. It would have to take into consideration ethnic and physical factors such as the diversity of race and religion. The vast mountain barriers and the network of rivers and hill-torrents cutting one part of the country off from another tend to restrict mutual intercourse and confine the various population groups within limited and isolated areas. Here only a bird's-eye view of the major sections of the population is possible.

### JAMMU

The hilly tract extending to the plains of the Punjab from the snowy mountains bounding the Kashmir Valley on its south is the home of the Dogras, a hardy people divided into several castes and sects both Hindu and Mussalman. Belonging to the Aryan race, they speak the Dogri language, a mixture of Sanskrit, Punjabi and Persian words deriving its origin from the Indo-Aryan branch of Sanskrit.

There are numerous sub-castes among the Dogra population of Jammu, but a feature common to them all is their hardiness. Their staple food is rice, wheat and pulses. The observance of common festivals like Basant, Navroz, Sair and Dussehra testifies to an extraordinary spirit of tolerance and goodwill amongst both the Hindu and Muslim Dogras, as well as the members of other castes. They dress in a short coat or freely-flowing shirt, with pyjamas loose to the knees and tight-fitting downwards. The men generally wear a light turban and tie a *kamarband* at the waist. The women dress in a tight-fitting bodice or jumper with pyjamas similar to those of their menfolk and a shawl or a *dupatta* thrown over the head.

<sup>1</sup> Stein, *Ancient Geography of Kashmir*. See his trans. of *Rajatarangini*, p. 400.



For the Brahmans of the Jammu province agriculture is the main source of income, and the calling of religious ministers and priests is confined to a comparatively small number of families. They are a peace-loving people and have always borne the hardships of life with a cheerful disposition.

The Dogra Rajputs are not big in physical stature ; they average five feet four in height. Of slim build they have somewhat high shoulders and curiously bowed legs and, though not muscular, are active and untiring. Their complexion is a light shade of brown, rather darker than the husk of the almond. The women, because of their less exposure have a brighter tint. They possess well-formed features, composed of a slightly hooked nose, well-shaped mouth and small brown eyes.

In character the Rajputs are simple and child-like. They cling to their prejudices ; and the clan spirit, so common among mountain folk throughout the world, persists among them in the hard and fast rules of the *biradari* system. They can endure long marches and stand the cold climate well. Among the Muslim Rajputs, the Chibbalis and the Sudans are the chief sects. They are a brave people and make the army their profession.

Khatris and Mahajans form the backbone of trade and commerce in the Jammu province. They are less good-looking than the Rajputs and less inured to physical hardship. But they are men of judgment, and literacy has made great progress among both men and women.

Lastly there is the class of Harijans called Meghs, Chamiars and Doombs. They form a more than fair proportion of the population of Jammu and have suffered numerous disabilities, civic and religious, at the hands of the high-caste Hindus. The levelling influence of education which engenders tolerance and fellow feeling has, however, paved the way for a steady improvement of their social status. The Harijans are a community with clean habits and mostly follow the calling of agriculture. Only a few are cobblers or scavengers.

The inhabitants of the region of the 'Middle Mountains' are a virile and active people called Paharis. Hardy and of powerful frame, they lead a rough life, eking out a sustenance by terrace cultivation on the slopes of the steep hills. Poor communications with the outside world and between the different villages, due to the difficulties of the terrain, have served to keep them poor. The language they speak is a mixture of Hindi, Punjabi, Dogri and Sanskrit words. They dress in grey woollen coats, with *kamarband*, and wear loose pyjamas. The women are clad in long gowns tied with a *kamarband*, their attire being completed by a cap and shawl. Into this region have come people

from Kashmir Valley as settlers, inhabiting large tracts of the country and adopting the same dress. They speak a mixture of the Pahari and Kashmiri languages.

Another interesting hill people are the Gujjars. The climate and pastures of these altitudes are favourable for rearing cattle and sheep and from ancient times the Gujjars and their neighbours, the Gaddis, have been breeders. They lead semi-nomadic lives, moving in summer with their herds and flocks from the warm regions of Jammu. They are then to be found in parts of Kashmir, building their flat-topped houses on seemingly inaccessible heights and being everywhere perfectly at home with their animals. They are said to be Rajputs who migrated from Rajasthan and adopted the Muslim faith. Their language, Gujjari, is now definitely recognised to be a form of Rajasthani. Their outdoor life spent in some of the healthiest parts of the country and their nourishing diet of bread made from corn, with milk and butter as other constituents, result in their being a long-lived people. They are a fine tall race, with a decidedly Jewish cast of features. Their good faith is proverbial and they are generously disposed. Fairly well represented in most parts of Jammu and Kashmir, they muster strong in the Poonch, Riasi and Muzaffarabad districts.

### KASHMIR VALLEY

The people of the Kashmir Valley are physically a fine stock, the men being tall and well-built. They are an ancient race with complexions varying from olive to a ruddy and fair hue. Their features are well-shaped and regular. Lively and intelligent, they are full of fun and fond of amusement. The beauty of their women has been long and much extolled.

Numerous explanations, some of them verging upon the fantastic, have been advanced to account for their origin. For example, one theory puts them down as being descendants of one of the lost tribes of Israel, this perhaps being suggested by the Jewish [cut of features to be found among some of the older people who look the patriarchal type.

According to the legend, as mentioned in the *Rajatarangini* and the *Nilamatpurana*, the Valley which was a vast mountain lake was drained by Kashyapa Rishi who imported Brahmans and sages from India to live there. In those pre-historic days, it is said, tribes called Pishachas and Yakshas were living there. They used to give trouble to these Brahmans and as advised by Nila the lord of Nagas, the Brahmans off and on offered food and clothing to these tribes, who then allowed them a peaceful time. The festival of *khichiamavas* is still observed by

Kashmiri Brahmins on the 15th day of the dark fortnight of Pausa (Dec-Jan) when *khichri* is cooked in every house and kept outside in new earthen plates as present to the Pishachas and Yakshas.

A student of the *Rajatarangini* will have no hesitation to admit that before the advent of Islam in the 14th century the population of Kashmir was not entirely Brahmin. We find the names of several sects namely *Nishads*, *Khashas*, *Darads*, *Bhauhtas*, *Bhikshas*, *Damaras*, *Tantrins*, etc. who constantly gave trouble not only to the rulers of the country but also to the Brahmins. How and wherefrom they came is a long study in itself. That the Kashmiris form a branch of the race which brought the languages of Indo-Aryan type into India is a fact established by the evidence of their language and physical appearance.<sup>1</sup> But the period of their immigration, and the route they came by, are still moot points among the authorities on the subject. Suffice it to say that they have till now preserved a distinct form of culture and in ancient times produced a civilization which would have made a greater mark in the world's history had there been a possibility of better and easier intercourse with the rest of the world.

Yet during the long and chequered history of Kashmir there have been periods when the people came in contact with the Roman, Greek and Persian civilizations resulting in a happy blending of cultures, at once tolerant and sympathetic towards the ideas and beliefs of others.<sup>2</sup> The Kashmiris demonstrated it practically. When, for instance, Brahminism replaced the earliest forms of Naga worship there was the least tinge of religious persecution. On the other hand, the Nagas are even to this day venerated by the general populace in the various springs. Buddhism came into ascendancy in the second century B.C. and in contrast to the religious feuds in the rest of India we find the Buddhist kings and ministers building temples and *viharas* dedicated to Hindu as well as to the Buddhist deities. And when Buddhism had had its day, the change was marked by a conspicuous absence of force or bigotry. In the 14th century A.D. Islam entered Kashmir and as usual the broad-minded Kashmiris welcomed its exponents. The synthesis of Hindu and Islamic religious thought found its greatest champions in Lalleshwari and Sheikh Nur-ud-din who are even to this day venerated by the Hindus and Muslims alike. During the darkest periods of religious persecutions by ignorant and fanatical outsiders, the people of Kashmir lived amicably, together giving what little solace, shelter and comfort they could to their brothers in distress.

The Brahmins popularly called Kashmiri Pandits, form a distinct

1 Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II.

2 Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 155.



class of their own and are considered to be the purest specimen of the ancient Aryan settlers in the Valley.<sup>1</sup> During numerous political vicissitudes they suffered at the hands of religious persecutors. Subsequently during the long and peaceful reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin most of them returned to their original homeland. They studied the Persian language and regained their traditional occupation, namely government service, which they continued to hold through the periods of Mughal, Pathan and Sikh rule. The newcomers assumed the appellation of *Bhanmasi* in contradistinction to *Malmasi* which the indigenous inhabitants had assumed. The *Malmasis* observe the "lunar" and the *Bhanmasis* the "solar" form of astronomical calendar. They, however, have no restriction with regard to inter-marriage, etc. The *Karkuns* or government servants, having given up the study of Sanskrit in favour of Persian, employed their daughters' eldest sons as their priests who were called *Bhashyabhats*. In course of time the *Karkuns* and *Bhashyabhats* became two subcastes, intermarriage between the two being restricted.

The Kashmiri Pandits are divided into 133 exogamous *gotras*, each member of which claims to be a descendant of a *Rishi* whose name the *gotra* bears. Generally the social position is determined by the nature of occupation followed, rather than by the *gotra*. Those who have been employed in superior state service since two or three generations hold their heads high above others.

Claiming to be the offspring of *Rishis* and belonging to the highest order of Brahmans, the *Sarswats*, Kashmiri Pandits constitute a small community which is highly advanced in education, more than 70 per cent of its members being literate. Their chief occupation is government service. In India many well known administrators and politicians have been Kashmiri Pandits. In the field of art, philosophy and literature they have produced a galaxy of authors, savants and saints. They possess the knack of adapting to changed circumstances at short notice and during the present time are adopting new avenues of profession.

Sikhs are another small community. Before 1947 they were chiefly concentrated in Muzaffarabad district. Recent developments have forced them to migrate to other parts of the State. Most of them were originally Brahmans imported by Raja Sukh Jiwan (1754 A.D.) and were converted to Sikhism in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1819-39 A.D.) They are a hardy people and mostly agriculturists. Recently they have taken to the military and police service of the State.

An overwhelming majority of the people in the Valley profess the Muslim religion. The advent of Islam during the 13th and 14th cen-

<sup>1</sup> Monier-Williams, *Modern India and the Indians*, p. 151.



The Lidder at Pahalgam





Mother and Child (Kashmiri Pandit)



turies surely but slowly changed the social structure of the Kashmiris, but they maintained their traditions of love and tolerance.

"The Mussalmans of the Valley," says Lawrence, "may have retained, for some time after their conversion to Islam, some of the Hindu customs of endogamy within the caste and exogamy outside the *gotra*, but there is no trace of these customs now and the different tribal names or *krams* are names and nothing more."<sup>1</sup>

It is now possible for a *Dar* to marry a girl of the *Ganai kram* and vice versa, provided both are agriculturists. The intermarriage among the low caste *Wattals* or scavengers is still a taboo. There is, however, a sort of caste system prevalent, inasmuch as the members of one profession prefer to marry their sons and daughters among the followers of a similar profession. Thus, it is very rarely that goldsmiths (*sonar*) and blacksmiths (*khar*) contract marriages among themselves. The old *krams* or nicknames of *Pandit*, *Bhat*, *Dar*, etc. are, however, still retained and new ones also added by reason of the head of the family's or any of his ancestors' special calling or because of such peculiar circumstances which may have occurred to him.

"For instance", says Pandit Anand Koul, "a man, named Wasdev, had a mulberry tree growing in his courtyard and, therefore, he was called Wasdev Tul (mulberry). He, in order to get rid of this nickname, cut down the tree. But a *mund* (trunk) remained and people began to call him Wasdev Mund. He then removed the trunk of the tree but its removal resulted in a *khud* (depression) and henceforth people called him Wasdev Khud. He then filled up the depression but the ground became a *teng* (mound) and he was called thereupon Wasdev Teng. Thus, exasperated he gave up any further attempt to remove the cause of his nickname and it continued to be Teng which is now attached to the names of his descendants."<sup>2</sup>

The *Sheikh*, *Sayyid* and *Pirzada* are still considered to be *krams* of respectability among the Muslims. Mullahs or priests, though not numerous, are a class by themselves and every village has got a family or two to minister to the religious needs of the people and to officiate at the birth, marriage or death ceremonies. Recently they have taken to agriculture also but otherwise they live by the free gifts of grains bestowed on them by the villagers at harvest time.

The Muslim population of the Valley is divided into the Sunni and the Shia sects, the former being in a preponderating majority. In certain

1 *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 306.

2 *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p. 20

*tehsils* and villages there is, however, a concentration of Shias. They have monopolized the papier machie trade and during the hey-day of the shawl industry most of the factories were owned by them.

There are some settlements of Pathans and Mughals in certain parts of the Valley reminiscent of their rule, but now they have been absorbed in the general population of the State, the appellation of *Khan* and *Sirdar* being only names.

The Bombas and Khakhas are the inhabitants of the Jhelum Valley below Baramula. They were a source of constant terror to the Kashmiris till Maharaja Gulab Singh (d. 1857) subdued them. They used to carry out marauding expeditions into the Valley and even now mothers quieten their crying children by saying that Khakhas had come. They now follow the peaceful avocations of agriculture and trade.

Chaupans, the hereditary shepherds who tend the sheep and cattle of the villagers during the summer months by taking them to green pastures on the various *margs* or meadows on the mountains, are a class of cheery, active men strictly marrying among themselves and not allowing any outsider to usurp their hereditary calling. They have a most characteristic whistle and their healthy robust life in the high mountains makes them a lovable people. The Chaupans have some knowledge of simple herbs and bring them down for the poor villagers. In winter and early spring they live in the villages, where sometimes they possess a little arable land. Just like the Mullah the Chaupan gets his remuneration at the time of harvesting of crops in the shape of grains and cash.

The Bands or Bhagats correspond to the Mirasis in India and carry on the profession of singing and dancing and sometimes go in bands to perform short comic plays in different villages. They add piquance and gaiety to the otherwise dull and monotonous life of the villagers and are in great demand at marriage and other festivities.

The people with whom the visitors to the Valley generally come in contact are the hanjis or boatmen of Kashmir. They are an ancient race and the *Rajatarangini* often mentions the *Nishads* (boatmen) and boat bridges.<sup>1</sup> Some claim Noah as their ancestor but it is generally believed that they were Kshatriyas before their conversion to Islam. They still disdainfully refer to a novice at boatcraft as a Shudra. There are many classes of boatmen generally according to the boat they ply and live in. The *bahts* (barge) boatmen have recently taken to timber and grain trades and with the rise in their standard of life have acquired a respectability over other hanjis. The *doonga* and houseboat hanji looks cleaner and can speak English and Hidustani fairly well. He is

<sup>1</sup> Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, v-101,

intelligent and at a very short notice can perform the duties of an accomplished butler or an expert cook, a seasoned shikari or an experienced guide. Most of the visitors owe their happy and trouble-free holiday in the Valley to the hanji, though he is more sinned against than sinning. There are other classes of hanjis, e.g. *Dal hanji* who carry vegetables from the garden to the market and are considered the lowest. The *Gari hanji* are those who collect the *singhara* (water chestnut) from the Wular lake. The *Gada hanji* or fishermen are well known for their close communal feelings and generally support their brothers in distress.

The Kashmiri language has now been placed by Dr. Grierson in the Dardic branch of non-Sanskritic languages in his *Linguistic Survey of India*.<sup>1</sup> This view about the Kashmiri language is contrary to the popular and local belief that Kashmiri was originally the language of Brahmans and has grown out of Sanskrit. There is no script of its own but the Kashmiri language has a vast store of rich proverbs, sayings and folklore. There are some epic poems rendered into Kashmiri, as well as a good number of lyric poems. Recently the Persian script has been adapted for its use and Kashmiri literature is growing in quantity as well as in quality.

The dress of the Kashmiris comprises a long loose cotton or woollen smock, buttoning at the back and falling to the ankles. There is very little difference between the *phiran* (smock) worn by men and women. A pyjama of the loose type is generally worn under the *phiran* and this is all the dress of an average villager. Women wear a skull cap surrounded by a fillet of red colour in the case of Muslim and of white in the case of Pandit women. A shawl or a white *chaddar* thrown gracefully over the head and shoulders, more as a protection from the sun than to hide the features, completes their headgear. Men wear a turban as a sign of respectability and affluence. The ordinary peasant is content with wearing the long pointed skull cap. In winter a *kangri* is taken under the *phiran* to keep oneself warm. This ingenious little stove consists of an earthen jar of about six inches diameter covered with a basket of wickerwork. Charcoal cinders of a special type are put in it to give a constant and continuous warmth.

The staple food of the Kashmiris is rice. They take plenty of vegetables but the favourite is the *hak* or *karam sag*. In the cities mutton is consumed in large quantities but in the villages it is still a luxury reserved only for festive occasions. Though living in a cold region, Kashmiris abhor the use of liquor. They have, however, found a cheap and harmless substitute in tea which they take often. Its preparation is also quite distinct, salt being used instead of sugar. Green

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1 Vol. VIII, Part II.



leaves are boiled hard and to give it a pink colour a pinch of bicarbonate of soda is added. Every time is tea time in a Kashmiri home and the samovar is generally steaming throughout the day. It would be sheer discourtesy to allow even an odd visitor to leave the house without serving him with a hot piping cup of pink-coloured tea.

A Kashmiri is noted for his hospitality as much as for his patient hard work. He is a clever craftsman, his wares decorating many a house and palace throughout the world. He is kind to his wife and children and divorce scandals are extremely rare. Theft in the villages is uncommon and crime against person negligible.

#### RITUALS AND CEREMONIES

Coming from the same stock and possessing a common cultural heritage, the people of Kashmir have many resemblances in dress, social customs and ceremonies though grouped among themselves as the followers of two different faiths. These resemblances in certain social customs are even connected with birth, marriage and death. The sacred shrines of both the communities are situated close together and it is a frequent occurrence that the fairs at these shrines are also held on the same date. The system of *khanadamadi*, a variant of the Hindu custom of adoption, is prevalent among both the communities. In all the important social functions of a Hindu his Muslim friends and neighbours take a keen and personal interest and vice versa.

Many of these ceremonies and rituals have undergone some minor changes among both the communities due to the impact and influence of modern education and economic strains and stresses. For instance, the old system of having a grass bed for the mother at the time of her confinement has been generally discarded, thanks to the efforts of the medical practitioners who have brought home to the people the dangers of this insanitary practice. Similarly, having costly and decorative dresses for the groom and display of fireworks on festive occasions have been given up; and it is generally found that the sumptuous and prolonged feasts with their bad economic results are things of the past.

#### HINDU CUSTOMS AND CEREMONIES

Among the Kashmiri Pandits the birth of a male child is generally hailed with joy, while that of a girl evokes little or no pleasure, for there is the custom of costly dowries. For eleven days after a child is born, the family and near relatives cannot perform any religious ceremonies. On the eleventh day a purification ceremony, the *kahnethar*, takes place. On that day, the mother of the child leaves her room. A *havan* is performed and the child given a name. Before this, however, on the

some verses from the Quran are pronounced into the ear of the dying man. Those around call on the name of God and break into weeping when he breathes his last. The corpse is then bathed and wrapped in a shroud and carried to the graveyard in a wooden coffin which can readily be procured from a nearby mosque. The burial is accompanied with recitation of the holy verses from the Quran and other sacred books. The mourners then pray for the peace of the soul of the departed and return to their homes. For some days till the coming Friday, the chief mourner visits the grave daily with the Mullah and offers prayers. On the following Friday, all the friends and relatives of the departed gather at the grave and offer *fatiha* or prayers. They then return to the house of the chief mourner and are served with light refreshments. For a year or two, the Mullah receives alms from the house of the departed on certain Mussalman holy days. The graveyard is planted with iris, tulips, narcissi and various spring flowers.

The Mussalmans of the Valley are very fond of celebrating their holy festivals with great eclat. On the Id day they don their new clothes and attend mass prayers in the Idgah of the towns and villages. Presents are exchanged between relatives and friends. Married daughters and their husbands receive a greater share of these presents. Feasts are held and sumptuous dishes served.

The people visit holy places like Tsarar Sharif, Mukhdoom Sahib, Rishi Mol, etc., particularly during the annual fairs. Thousands gather and enjoy the shopping provided by many hawkers dealing in things useful to a householder—baskets, earthen vessels, blankets, cotton goods, cheap jewellery, etc. There are also spring and autumn festivals when cultivators offer prayers for getting a good harvest. These *melas* provide a pleasant relief to the otherwise dull life of a villager, and both young and old look forward keenly to their return.

## FRONTIER DISTRICTS

To the north of the Valley is the region called Dardistan inhabited by broad-shouldered, moderately stout-built, well-proportioned and active highlanders. They are not particularly handsome but have a good cast of countenance with hazel or brown eyes.

“The word ‘Dard’,” says Sir George Grierson, “has a long history and the people bearing the name are a very ancient tribe who are spoken of in Sanskrit literature as Darada. The Greeks and the Romans included in the Dard country the whole mountainous tract between the Hindukush and the frontiers of India.”<sup>1</sup>

1 *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II. The seat of the Dards which does not seem to have changed since the time of Herodotus, extends from Chitral and Yasin, across the Indus, regions of Gilgit, Chilas and Bunji to the Kishenganga valley to the immediate north of Kashmir.

Because of its strategic position this region has always been coveted by different kingdoms on its borders. But the Dards managed to maintain their independent status till the middle of the last century when Maharaja Gulab Singh and his son, Maharaja Ranbir Singh, finally subjugated them. They are the followers of the Sunni and Shia tenets of Islam. The people of Hunza are followers of Ali Ilahi faith. Before conversion to Islam, the Dards were followers of Buddhism and even to this day traces of Buddhist influence can be found in most of their customs and rituals. There are still some villages in the side valleys which follow the Buddhist religion. That the cultural influences from Kashmir extended to this region and beyond is now amply proved by the recent discovery in this part of the country of birch-bark manuscripts in the Sarda script.

Chilasis are a Dard tribe inhabiting a long valley on the west of Nanga Parbat. They are notorious for their ferocity and until 1850 used to come round the flank of the mountainous Astor valley to plunder and kill.

The whole region of Dardistan is barren and except for small patches of vegetation near mountain torrents, little can be produced elsewhere. Wheat, barley and *grim* are grown and form the staple food of the people. It is, however, a deficit area in food. Fruits, particularly grapes, are grown in the Gilgit town proper.

Living as they do in a cold region the Dards dress in a woollen coat with a *choga* or a long coat thrown over the shoulders. The pyjamas are worn loose. The cap is a sort of a deep bag with its sides rolled up and fitting the head closely.

The region to the north-east of the Valley is called Baltistan. Being situated in between Ladakh and Dardistan, there has been a mixture of the two races resulting in Baltis being a little taller than the Ladakhis. Although the preponderant majority of the population profess the Muslim faith of the Shia sect, there are still some villages professing the Buddhist faith.

The Baltis are a people of good cheer and great patience. Being of a prolific nature owing to the prevailing custom of polygamy, they are forced to seek labour in far off places in the rest of India, their own land being too barren to support a large population. They wear a short woollen coat and trousers and a small round cap. Kashmiris call this region *Tsera* (apricot) *Bhautun* from the abundance of apricots cultivated there and exported in dry form to India.

Further to the east is the magic land of Ladakh, the home of the ancient Bhauttas. They have a Turanian cast of features. They are a guileless people and it is a joy to sit in their company and partake of





Religious dance at a monastery in Leh (Ladakh Buddhist)



On the Dal Lake. A boatwoman with child (Kashmiri Muslim).

their hearty laughter and hospitality. They rarely quarrel or lose temper even when they might be under the influence of their common beverage—the Chhang. They are clad in long woollen coats of grey colour with broad girdles of blue, red or orange, and velvet caps of various colours, red, blue, green or even black with red lining. The women have a headdress of red cloth covering also the neck and back and closely studded with turquoises and brooches. On either side these are balanced by large earlaps of black fur. The poorer people wear long and thick black coats and trousers. Over-all coats of goat-skin are worn. Long boots of thick felt with a leather slipper for the sole are a peculiarity of this region.

The Ladakhis are divided into four principal castes, namely, Gyalpo or Raja, Jirak or officials, Mungrik or cultivators and Ringan or menials. The majority are cultivators. A Ladakhi village has invariably a small or a big *gompa* or monastery according to its size. Every *gompa* maintains a number of monks and nuns presented to it by their parents in their childhood and dedicated for life to its service. Most of these monasteries are rich and contain valuable collections of old manuscripts chiefly on the Buddhist religion.<sup>1</sup>

The staple food of the Ladakhis is *grim* which is ground into flour and eaten mixed with tea and butter as a rough paste or in the form of bread. Although professing the Buddhist faith, the Ladakhis are non-vegetarian. Being inhabitants of a cold region they drink a kind of country liquor called Chhang which is brewed from *grim*. With the opening of a regular air service to Leh and also a motorable road, Ladakhis look forward to greater prosperity in days to come.

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1 Cunningham, *Ladak* ; *Physical, Statistical and Historical*,



## CHAPTER TWO

### SOURCES OF KASHMIR HISTORY

THE SOURCES from which a knowledge of the early and medieval history of Kashmir is derived may conveniently be divided into two broad categories : the rich collection of indigenous records, traditions, and archaeological and numismatic finds ; and to augment and corroborate these, the notices in foreign chronicles, records of travellers, as also recent archaeological discoveries in places adjoining the borders of the State.

#### HISTORICAL TRADITIONS

It has often been complained that ancient India had never known the study of history as had Greece or Rome. "We have to admit that the literary genius of India, so active and fertile in almost all conceivable branches of study, was not applied to chronicling the records of kings and the rise and fall of States and nations."<sup>1</sup>

It is, however, refreshing to turn to Kashmir where, of all the literature covering varied branches of Sanskrit scholarship in which Kashmiris distinguished themselves, the production of an uninterrupted series of written records of its history, reaching back beyond the medieval times, is the most outstanding. Writing of history seems to have been a traditional art. We have no less an authority than Kalhana himself (12th century A.D.) to testify to the existence in his time of at least eleven earlier compositions on the history of Kashmir which he consulted to write his own immortal *Rajatarangini*. We also learn from him that there had been extensive works of ancient date containing the royal chronicles of Kashmir. In his time, however, these did not exist and he attributes their loss mainly to the composition by Suvrata of a popular abstract which led to the neglect and subsequent loss of most of these earlier works.

Kalhana mentions by name some of the compositions on the history of Kashmir which he consulted—Kshemendra's *Nrapavali*, chronicles of Padmamihira and Chavillakaran and the *Nilamatpurana*. Padmamihira had, according to Kalhana, obtained his information on earlier kings from Helaraja who had composed a 'List of Kings' (*Parthivavali*). Excepting the *Nilamatpurana* all the "eleven works of former scholars containing the chronicle of kings" which he consulted

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1 *The Vedic Age*, Ed. by R. C. Mazumdar, p. 47.

are now lost and this invests the *Rajatarangini* with an added importance as the sole historical record in Sanskrit literature.

An earlier text to which Kalhana refers and which he used as one of his sources of information, is *Nilamatpurana* which, fortunately, we still possess. It claims to give the sacred legends regarding the origin of the Valley, and the special ordinances which Nila, the lord of Kashmir Nagas, had revealed for his worship, and rites to be observed by the people to ward off the evil intentions of Pishachas. Portions of this ancient text dealing with the description and legends of various *tirthas* in the Valley help us in reconstructing the ancient geography of Kashmir. Kalhana admits having taken from this source some royal names of the early period. Professor Buhler held that the *Nilamatpurana* in its present form could not be older than the sixth or seventh century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

For further elucidation of the ancient geography of Kashmir which helps in following Kalhana's narrative, there are fortunately more sources. Kashmir has, since early times, been pre-eminently a region of holy sites and places of pilgrimage of all kinds. We have numerous texts known as *Mahatmyas*—more than fifty in number—on the important *tirthas*. Apart from giving legends regarding the origin of a particular *tirtha* and its importance as an object of pilgrimage, these *Mahatmyas* throw considerable light on the historical topography of the Valley.

Among the texts dealing specially with the sacred sites of Kashmir is the *Haracaritacintamani*. It is not like the *Nilamatpurana* or the *Mahatmyas* an anonymous composition, but its author, Jayadratha, belonged to the family of Rajanakas and lived about the end of the twelfth or beginning of the thirteenth century. The local names as recorded by Jayadratha agree closely with those of the *Rajatarangini*.

*Kuttanimata Kavya* written by Jayapida's court poet (8th century A.D.) contains a vivid picture of the contemporary social and economic life in the Valley.

The poly-histor Kshemendra (11th century A.D.) to whose work, *Nrapavali*, Kalhana refers, is a helpful author, portraying the socio-political life of Kashmiris of his time. Kshemendra was of wealthy parentage, well educated, and had travelled extensively abroad. It is unfortunate that his historical work *Nrapavali* is lost, but his *Desopadesa* caricatures the daily life of different sections of the people of the Valley, such as cheats, misers, prostitutes, bawds, ostentatious voluptuaries, students, degraded Saiva *gurus* and so on. The misrule and oppression prevalent in his time and earlier is depicted in his

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1 Report, p. 10,

satirical poem *Narmamala*. His *Lokaprakasha* is a handbook which throws light on the life of the people and the prevailing administrative set-up. It contains specimens of bonds, *hundis*, contracts, official reports and the like.

One of Kshemendra's poems, intended to describe the snares of worldly temptations, is *Samayamatrika*, which throws considerable light on the prevailing conditions—social and economic—of Kashmir. Describing the rakish progress of a courtesan all over the Valley, he gives vivid descriptions of places she visits and the people she comes across. Most of these places can be easily traced on the map. More than once curious touches of true local colour impart additional interest to these references. To this poem, for example, we owe the earliest mention of the Pir Panjal Pass.

To Bilhana we owe another aspect of the sketch of topographical interest. He left his native land early in the reign of king Kalasa (A.D. 1063-89) and after long wanderings became famous as the court poet of the Calukya king Tribhuvanmalla Parmadi in the Deccan. In the last canto of his historical poem, the *Vikramankadevacarita*, Bilhana gives us a glowing picture of the beauties of the capital of Kashmir, which though laudatory in nature, is exact in local details. In another passage the poet describes his rural home and its surroundings at the village of Khonamusha (modern Khonamuh), 9 miles to the south of Srinagar.

Similar in character, though less ample in detail, is the description of Kashmir and Pravarapura (present Srinagar), its capital, which Mankha, Kalhana's contemporary, inserts in the third canto of his *Srikanthacarita* (written between 1128-44 A.D.). Here we have the advantage of a commentary written by Jonaraja, the Chronicler (15th century A.D.) which duly notices and explains the points of local interest.

#### THE RAJATARANGINI

And then we have the famous *Rajatarangini* written in Sanskrit verse by Kalhana in A.D. 1148-49. "This is the only work in ancient Indian literature that may be regarded as a historical text in the true sense of the word. The author has not only taken great pains to collect his material from the existing chronicles and other sources, but, at the beginning of his work, he has set down a few general principles for writing history which are remarkably far in advance of his age. Indeed these may be regarded as anticipating to a large extent the critical method of historical research which was not fully developed till the nineteenth century A.D."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Vedic Age*, Ed. by R. C. Mazumdar, p. 49.



The *Rajatarangini* comprises in eight cantos of Sanskrit verse the history of the various dynasties which ruled Kashmir from the earliest period down to the time of the author, who began to write his work in 1148 A.D. Allowing for the legendary character of some of the events mentioned in the first three cantos, Kalhana's work still retains a connected account of Kashmir history which has stood the test of historical criticism well. It can be accepted as a reliable record from the seventh century onwards, and steadily increases in detail and interest as we approach the time of the author.

"The *Rajatarangini*," observes Jawaharlal Nehru, "is a rich store-house of information ; political, social and to some extent economic."<sup>1</sup> It is not only a work of serious contribution to history, but also a work of art. "In one long series, as if on a band of gelatine of a cinematograph film, Kalhana brings before our eyes vivid pictures of a bygone age, through episodes which contain the different *rasas* or sentiments of love and heroism, of pathos and marvel."

As early as the 15th century, King Zain-ul-abidin had it translated into Persian. Later, under orders of Akbar, Abul Fazl incorporated long abstracts in his *Ain-i-Akbari*. Bernier who visited Kashmir in 1665 makes a mention of it in his *Letters*. Moorcraft obtained a copy of the *Rajatarangini* during his visit to the Valley in 1823 A.D. This copy was translated into French by M. Troyer. Later several European scholars worked on its translations but were handicapped for want of a reliable text. Finally, through the efforts of Dr. Buhler, such a text was found in Kashmir and this formed the basis of Dr. Stein's monumental translation of the *Chronicles* published in 1900. In 1935, R.S. Pandit brought out his English translation of the *Rajatarangini* laying emphasis on its poetic and literary qualities.

#### KALHANA

Kalhana has shared the fate of so many Indian authors of note whose memory lives solely in their works. There is no record to tell us of the life of this scholar-poet to whom we owe a knowledge of ancient Kashmir.

From the indications scattered through the narrative; however, we can gather some instructive facts regarding the author's personality and the time and surroundings in which he lived.

Kalhana, according to his own statement, wrote his work during the years 1148-49 A.D.<sup>2</sup> His description of the events which occurred during the troubled years 1112-21 A.D. imply personal observations

1 Introduction to R. S. Pandit's *River of Kings*, p. XII.

2 *Rajatarangini*, i-52 and viii-3404.

made with a mature mind. Dr. Stein, therefore, places his date of birth about the beginning of the 12th century.

The commencement of this century is marked in the history of Kashmir by an important dynastic revolution which brought about material changes in the political state of the kingdom. King Harsa (A.D. 1089-1101), who seems at first to have secured a period of consolidation and peace, subsequently fell a victim to his own Nero-like propensities. Heavy fiscal exactions necessitated by a luxurious court, and the cruel persecution by the Damara clan who formed the landed aristocracy, led to a rebellion under the leadership of the brothers Uccala and Sussala, two relatives of Harsa, who succumbed in the struggle and met a tragic death by murder. During the following seven years, civil war continued almost without interruption. The greatest portion of Kalhana's life passed in what was for Kashmir one long period of civil war and political dissolution.

Kalhana's father, Campaka, held several responsible positions under King Harsa. We first meet him as *Dvarpati* or commander of the frontier defences. Later he became his minister and at the time of Harsa's flight, he was one of his few followers who remained loyal to him to the last. From the mention of Parihaspura as the birthplace of his uncle, Kanaka, we may infer that this town was the original home of Kalhana's family. A Brahman by descent, he was a Saiva by faith, but throughout his narrative he maintains a friendly attitude towards Buddhism.

His composition proves amply that his studies in various branches of traditional learning had been both thorough and extensive. His acquaintance with the older standard works of poetry, such as the *Raghuvansha* and *Meghaduta*, may be assumed *a priori*. He seems to have thoroughly studied the epics like *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* also.

The dynastic war which had cost Harsa his throne and life had a lasting effect on the fortunes of Kalhana's family. His father, who in Harsa's reign had occupied one of the highest posts in the administration, played no longer any part in public life after his master's death. It seems that Kalhana himself never held any office under any subsequent ruler or otherwise enjoyed any special favour from the court. Probably we owe his activity as a chronicler to this fact. Born from a family of rank and note he could have expected to take an active share in the affairs of his country like his father before him. The adverse political circumstances closed for him the doors of service. What better use, congenial to his hereditary tastes, could he then make of his literary training than by recording the history of his country?

## AS A HISTORIAN

Kalhana's qualities as a historian are unsurpassed. For the collection of material for his history he not only consulted older works on the subject, but also used original sources like inscriptions of various kinds—those recording the construction of temples, memorials or places; records of land grants or privileges, etc. He also studied coins and inspected old buildings. He is a master of accurate topography of ancient Kashmir.

Kalhana's impartiality as a historian and his honesty of purpose are remarkable. He himself puts forth the ideal in the following words :

“That noble-minded (poet) is worthy of praise whose word, like that of a judge, keeps free from love or hatred in relating the facts of the past.”<sup>1</sup>

He does not hide from us the errors and weaknesses of the king under whom he wrote. He does not hesitate to condemn the later activities of king Harsa to whom he had good reason to be grateful for raising his family to high office or to expose with bitter sarcasm the cowardice and empty bragging of the Kashmiri soldiery.

Kalhana lived at a time when the invention of gun-powder and the printing press had not yet revolutionized human thought. He had not heard of the rights of man nor the denunciation of monarchy, but he passes many strictures against kings and priests, their morals and methods. He shows his aversion and contempt for the Damaras whose overbearing attitude was the direct cause of the civil wars which sapped the vitality of the kingdom. Equally critical is he of the doings of the Kayastha or clerical class who took every opportunity to fleece the poor. Similarly he does not hide his contempt for the priests whose pride was equal to their ignorance. He bitterly complains of their baneful influence on the affairs of the State.

“History, according to him, was not something to learn but something to make people live and understand life. He gives both sides of all questions and points out the faults as well as the virtues of the kings and other characters whom he describes. Further, his observations show that the achievements of the great are merely answers to certain big needs in society and that success was only possible because the time was ripe. Hence he does not cover up the faults of the State, an individual ruler or group of men. In his history there are no heroes or heroines and the few persons who might be so described are only functionaries of certain groups and have not been too much emphasized; indeed whether we love them or not for their virtues it is their vices which

1 Kalhana, *Op. Cit.*, i-7.



make them unforgettable. Another trait in Kalhana which is modern is his freedom from narrow nationalism. He pays a tribute of admiration to the brave men of Bengal who travelled all the way up to Kashmir and avenged, at the cost of their lives, the death of their king who had been treacherously murdered at Trigrami."<sup>1</sup>

Shortcomings certainly there are in his Chronicle when studied in the light of modern historical technique. He does not, for example, distinguish a legend from history. At places there are serious gaps in chronology. But still it is impossible to peruse the Chronicle and in particular its later portions, without realizing that the poet who wrote it had an observant eye and an open mind for the affairs of the world around him.

#### LATER CHRONICLES

Kalhana's work was continued by his countryman Jonaraja (d. 1459) who brought the Chronicle down to the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin (1420-70 A.D.). Jonaraja was a scholar of considerable attainments and seems to have been well-acquainted with the old nomenclature of the Valley. The greater portion of his Chronicle deals with the reigns of the late Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to Queen Kota. His pupil Srivara took up the thread and in four chapters wrote about the events from A.D. 1459 to 1486. Srivara is a slavish imitator of Kalhana. His text looks in a great portion more like a canto from the *Rajatarangini*, than an original composition. The value of his work however lies in giving the details of his contemporary life. His Chronicle shows the slow change in the names of localities from old to modern. For example we have the name of Mahasarit stream transformed into Mari, an evident adaptation of the modern Mar, and the *tirtha* of Martand regularly referred to by its modern name Bavan.

The Fourth Chronicle entitled *Rajavalipataka*, begun by Prajyabhatta whose composition ended with the year A.D. 1513-14, was completed by his pupil Suka some years after the annexation of Kashmir by Akbar (A.D. 1586). The slow change from the old to modern treatment of place-names and other details are more pronounced in the works of Prajyabhatta and Suka.

Notwithstanding the inferiority of these later Chronicles as literary composition when compared with Kalhana's work, "it seems that the later authors had greatly improved Kalhana's method of writing history. They are clear and perspicuous, and events are narrated consecutively, so that the whole narration runs in one continuous flow. The writers

1 Pandit, R.S. *River of Kings*, p. xxvii,

could not however forget that they were poets as well as historians, and consequently they interspersed their accounts with flowers of poesy and rhetorical flourishes.”<sup>1</sup> They are of immense value as being the sole and authentic record of the transitional period when Kashmir passed from the rule of Hindu to that of Muslim kings. They throw light on contemporary life of Kashmiris and record the troubles and oppression which lasted with short interruptions for two and a half centuries previous to Akbar’s conquest.

“It must be mentioned that valuable as the writings of these authors are from a historical point of view, in the absence of any other history of the country they relate to, we cannot unhesitatingly accept their estimation of persons and events when we remember that they were, what may be called, court pandits, and depended on the smiles of kings, whose accounts they wrote, for almost everything they had in the world.

“There is, however, no reason to disbelieve the correctness of their accounts, irrespective of the writers’ views, regarding the events narrated.”<sup>2</sup>

Though for nearly two centuries after the advent of the Muslim rule Sanskrit continued to be the language for transacting official business, yet with the increasing patronage bestowed on the Persian language and literature by the Muslim rulers, the chronicling of events in Sanskrit ceased to be in vogue. We have thereafter histories written in Persian by eminent Kashmirian scholars.

The earliest work was the Persian translation of the *Rajatarangini* by Mulla Ahmad who undertook it under orders of king Zain-ul-abidin. Mulla Ahmad Kashmiri, pupil of Muhammad Afzal of Bukhara who had come to Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Sikandar, was a profound scholar, a distinguished poet and a historian. His translation of Kalhana’s *Rajatarangini* named *Bahr-ul-Azmar* or the ‘Sea of Tales’, was perhaps not completed by him, for in 1594 A.D., Akbar asked Mulla Abdul Qadir Badayuni to rewrite and complete it.

Mulla Ahmad’s *Bahr-ul-Azmar* is not traceable nor is its rewritten version by Badayuni which might have given an indication of the scope of this work.<sup>3</sup>

1 Dutt, Jogesh Chunder, Preface to *Kings of Kashmira*, Vol. III, p. ii-iii.

2 *Ibid.*, p. ii-iii.

3 Badayuni (p. 384) says: “The Emperor had ordered me to rewrite the Persian translation of the *History of Kashmir* by Mulla Shah Ahmad of Shahabad, a learned man well versed in argumentative sciences and history. I was to write it in an easy style. This I did, and in the space of two months I presented my book, which was put in His Majesty’s Library to await its turn for reading.”

Mulla Ahmad's history, however, forms the basis of the work of another eminent historian—Malik Haider Chaudura. He wrote his history of Kashmir from the earliest times to his own in Persian in 1617, the 12th year of the accession of Jahangir. Malik Haider and his brother, Malik Ali, professed the Shia faith and were noblemen descended from Malik Muhammad Naji, the minister of Husain Shah Chak. In the latter part of his history, Haider Malik says that he spent twenty-four years of his life with Yusuf Shah Chak whom he followed in his banishment to Bihar. He was personally engaged with Sher Afgan Khan in the attack in which the latter succumbed in 1607 A.D. Haider and his brother protected Sher Afgan's widow, Mihr-un-Nisa Begum (afterwards Nur Jahan), against danger and she later warmly recommended him to Jahangir who bestowed upon him the titles of *Chagtai* and *Rais-ul-Mulk*, with an office in the government of Kashmir.

Haider Malik besides being a historian was also an architect. He rebuilt the Jamma Masjid of Srinagar which had been consumed by fire and also the Khanqah of Mir Shams-ud-Din Iraqi.<sup>1</sup>

Narayan Kaul Ajiz, a distinguished scholar of Persian language and literature and a poet, followed Haider Malik in writing a history of Kashmir. His *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* written in 1710 A.D. gives an assessment of the reigns of the Sultans and early Mughals from a liberal's point of view.

The tradition of writing history was continued by Khwaja Muhammad Azam Kaul of Didamar quarter of Srinagar, who flourished in Kashmir under the rule of the later Mughals. His history entitled *Waqat-i-Kashmir* was commenced in 1735 and completed in 1746. Khwaja Ahmad besides being a saintly person was also a poet and is the author of several works. He passed away in 1765. His son Khwaja Muhammad Aslam, is the author of *Gauhar-i-Alam* a history of Kashmir in which he has made considerable additions to his father's work.

Pandit Birbal Kachru who wrote his history of Kashmir in 1835 A.D. when Kashmir was under the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, was a great scholar of Persian and a poet too. Besides throwing light on the later history of Kashmir under the Mughal and Afghan rulers, his work is of immense value in assessing the economic condition of the various classes of people during this period.

As we come nearer our times, we find a number of histories written in Persian by Kashmirian scholars. The pride of place, however,

1 "On Sunday, the 7th of Urdibihishat, I rode to the village of Chaudura which is the native country of Haider Malik," writes Jahangir. See *Tuzuk-i-Jahangiri*, Rogers and Beveridge, Vol. II, p. 154-55.



goes to Maulvi Ghulam Hasan's *Twarikh-i-Kashmir* which in three volumes deals with the geography, political history and the arts and crafts of Kashmir. Maulvi Hasan was born at a village near Bandipur in Kashmir in 1832 and died at the same village in 1898. He came of a family of *Pirs* or Muhammadan priests, distinguished in Persian and Arabic scholarship. Hasan's father, Maulvi Ghulam Rasool was a Persian poet. Hasan took his lessons from him and other teachers and learnt the Unani system of medicine which he practised until the closing years of his life.<sup>1</sup>

The terrible famine of 1875-78 whose ravages assumed appalling proportions, moved Hasan and he wrote a historical account of the incidence of famine, making some constructive suggestions for prevention of such calamities in future. His interest in the history of Kashmir was roused while writing this pamphlet for which he had to consult old records. He was an authority on Kashmir and its past and when Sir W. Lawrence was Settlement Commissioner in Kashmir, Hasan supplied him with much historical and statistical information.<sup>2</sup> Hasan's deep attachment to the study of the history of his land took him to Pindori, a village in the Rawalpindi district where he had been informed there was a manuscript copy of Mulla Ahmad's translation of an ancient history, *Ratnakar Purana*, which contained an account of thirty-five kings, whose names, according to Kalhana were 'lost' to history. Hasan secured a copy of Mulla Ahmad's translation and incorporated the account of these 'lost' kings in his history. *Ratnakar Purana* is now untraceable and on this account Mulla Ahmad's translation is of immense importance.

The copy of the Pindori manuscript which Hasan had obtained was also unfortunately lost in a flood. In 1902, the Kashmir Government tried to secure a copy of Mulla Ahmad's history, but Mulla Mahmud, from whom Hasan had obtained his copy, had since died and his family had moved to Afghanistan.

Hasan seems to have taken great pains in writing his history which throughout maintains a high standard of historical sense and impartiality. Recently the Research and Publications Department of the State has printed this valuable manuscript.

With the adoption of Urdu and English as the court languages in the State towards the middle of the last century, we find some valuable

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1 Koul, Pandit Anand, *History of Kashmir*, JASB. Vol. IX No. 5.

2 He also taught him the Kashmiri language. In his *Valley of Kashmir*, Sir Walter expresses his gratefulness in these words: "What else (Kashmiri language) I have learnt I owe to Pir Hasan Shah, a learned Kashmiri, whose work has entirely been among the villagers."

contributions to the history of Kashmir made in these languages by Kashmirian scholars. In 1910 Pandit Anand Koul, who held a high post in Kashmir Government and who was one of the first Kashmiris to learn English, contributed two papers to the Asiatic Society of Bengal on the early period of Kashmir history which were published in the Journal of the Society. Besides his *Geography of Jammu and Kashmir*, he wrote books on the archaeological remains in the State, and on the Kashmiri language, folk-lore and arts and crafts of the Valley.

Ghulam Mohi-ud-din Sufi, a former Registrar of the Delhi University, began his history of Kashmir entitled *Kashir* in 1925 and completed it in 1949 when it was published by the Punjab University (Pakistan). It is a voluminous record of the achievements of Kashmiris after the advent of Islam into the Valley.

Similarly Muhammad-ud-din Fauq, a Kashmiri settled in Lahore, wrote extensively in Urdu on the geography, history and folk-lore of the Valley. His history of Kashmir was published in 1910. In 1936 he published an exhaustive survey of the origin and history of various communities and well-known families of Kashmir which is of considerable interest from anthropological and ethnic points of view.

#### INDIAN NOTICES

The conspicuous absence of useful information on Kashmir in Sanskrit literature outside the Valley may be attributed to the general character of that literature. For there is the same vagueness and insufficiency of local references in the case of territories adjoining the old centres of literary activity, as are found with regard to Kashmir.

We, however, find the name *Kashmira* as the designation of the region and its inhabitants, mentioned in Panani's great grammatical work, and in Patanjali's comments thereon. The Mahabharata too refers in several passages to Kashmir and its rulers, but in a fashion so general and vague that nothing but the situation of the country in the hill region to the North can be concluded therefrom. Kashmiris are referred to in the *Puranas* along with the tribes inhabiting the northern territories of India.

Varahamihra (circa. 500 A.D.) in his *Brihatsamhita* includes Kashmir in the northern division of India. Among tribes inhabiting this region and its neighbourhood we can identify the Abhisaras, Daradas, Darvas, Khasas and Kiras.

It is, however, with the rise of the Mughals that Muhammadan historians of India take interest in Kashmir and its people. The earliest historical reference to this part of India is in *Zafar-nama* by Sharaf-ud-din, the historian of Timur which was completed in 1424-25.

It throws light on Sikandar's relations with Timur when the latter invaded India. It also gives a brief description of the geography and people of Kashmir. Similarly, in the *Malfuzat-i-Timuri* which is said to have been written by Timur himself, there are references to his relations with Sultan Sikandar and to the topography of the Valley.

A detailed account, however, of Kashmir, its people, agriculture, religion, architecture, arts and crafts is given by Mizra Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*. Mirza Dughlat, a cousin of Babar and an adherent of Humayun, twice invaded Kashmir; once from Kashghar in 1533 and again from Lahore in 1540 when he ruled the Valley for ten years in the name of the puppet king, Nazuk Shah. It was during these years of his stay in Kashmir that he wrote his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, which though a history of the Mughals of Central Asia gives a detailed account of his invasion of Kashmir and draws a contemporary picture of the land and its people. Begun in 1541-42, it was completed in 1544-45 A.D.

The *Tabaqat-i-Akbari* by Nizam-ud-din contains a section dealing with the history of Kashmir from the earliest times to the conquest of the Valley by Akbar. Muhammad Qasim Firishta's *Tarikh-i-Firishta* also contains a chapter on Kashmir. His description of the agricultural products, religion and buildings of Kashmir is, however, based on *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and gives no new information.

Useful information about Akbar's relations with Chak rulers of Kashmir is contained in Abdul Qadir Badayuni's *Muntakhab-ut-Tawarikh*.

Abul Fazal's *Akbar-Nama* and *Ain-i-Akbari* are a mine of information on Kashmir, its geography, history, antiquities, administration, agriculture, arts and industries and the general economic and social condition of the people under the Shalmiri and early Mughal rulers.

In his inimitable style Jahangir in his *Tuzk* gives a description of Kashmir, the land he loved, and throws side-lights on the economic condition of its people under his rule.

Kashmir figures prominently thereafter in the works of writers on the history of India and particularly of the Punjab. We have, however, very scanty information from Indian sources about the conditions in Kashmir under the Afghans who conquered the Valley in 1752 A.D. and whose rule lasted till 1819, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh's forces drew them away and ushered in the Sikh rule.

For a detailed survey of the Sikh regime we have fortunately ample material in the accounts of several European travellers who began to visit this frontier State in increasing numbers.



## FOREIGN NOTICES

From ancient times Kashmir has attracted attention in countries beyond the frontiers of India. The earliest mention of the Valley and its adjacent territories is found in Ptolemy's geography. He places the region of Kaspeiria at 'below the sources of the Bidaspes (Vitasta) and of the Sandabal (Chandrabhaga) and of the Adris (Iravati).'<sup>1</sup>

In a notice which Stephanos of Byzantium has preserved from the *Bassarica*, a lost poem of Dionysios of Samos, we find a passage with a mention of Kaspeiroi as a tribe famous among all Indians for their fast feet. It is natural that living deep in the Himalayan valley surrounded by the high mountain walls, Kashmiris should develop marching powers and gain abroad the reputation of good pedestrians.

Hekataios (circa. 549-486 B. C.) mentions Kaspapyros as a city of Gandharians. Later Herodotus, the 'Father of history' mentioned the city of Kaspatyros as the place at which the expedition of Scylax of Koryanda, sent by Darius to explore the course of the Indus, embarked. As Kashmir had close cultural and political relations with Gandhara (Kabul valley) in ancient times, it is quite natural that the Kaspapyros of Hekataios and Kaspatyros of Herodotus should refer to Kashmir. These early classical notices are valuable inasmuch as they show the antiquity of the name by which the land has been known in India and abroad from time immemorial.

We have, however, more detailed references to Kashmir in Chinese records. At a period when Chinese knowledge of India was less developed Kashmir was mentioned under the general term of Ki-pin which though designating properly the Upper-Kabul Valley was vaguely applied to the northern territories of India.

The first clear reference to Kashmir is contained in a record dating from A.D. 541. The notice is based on the account of an Indian envoy who reached China during the early part of the reign of the T'ang dynasty.<sup>2</sup>

It describes Kashmir as belonging to the northern portion of India and 'enveloped on all sides like a precious jewel by the snowy mountains, with a valley in the south which leads up to it and serves as the gate of the kingdom.'

We have a full and detailed account of Kashmir recorded by the great Chinese pilgrim Heun Tsiang who reached the Valley from Urusha (Hazara) in the west in 631 A. D. and stayed on for two years to study Sanskrit and Buddhist lore. Not only does he accurately

1 Ptolemy, VII, i-42.

2 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 354.

describe the routes by which he entered and left the Valley, but he mentions the names of several *viharas* and *stupas* whose identity has been now established with several ancient sites in Kashmir. His account of the climate and soil of the Valley is as accurate as the description of the people who inhabited it. The tolerant nature of the king and his subjects, the geographical limits of his jurisdiction and the current traditions about the origin of the Valley recorded by him, throw a flood of light on the early history of the land.

Heun Tsiang's narrative tells us that he left the Valley in 633 A.D. by way of the Tosamaidan route and reached Pun-nu-tso the Parnotsa of Kalhana or modern Poonch. Both Poonch and Rajapuri (modern Rajauri) were subject to Kashmir.

The next Chinese notice of considerable historical interest is contained in the annals of the T'ang dynasty. They mention the arrival at the imperial court of the first embassy from Kashmir, sent by king Tchen-t'o-lo-pi-li (in or shortly after A.D. 713), and that of another embassy sent by his brother and successor Mu-to-pi. These names clearly refer to Chandrapida and Muktapida (Lalitaditya) of the *Rajatarangini*.

The description of Kashmir which follows these entries in the Chinese annals, corresponds to the accounts as recorded by Heun Tsiang. In addition, however, there is a reference to the lake Mo-ho-to-mo-loung or Mahapadma, the old name of the Wular. There is also an exact statement about the capital city which is named Po-lo-ou-lo-po-lo, a correct reproduction of Pravarapura, the name by which modern Srinagar was known then.

Another account of Kashmir and its people is furnished by Ou-kong, the Chinese pilgrim who visited Kashmir in 759 A.D. He also came from Urusha by the Jhelum Valley route and stayed in the Valley for four years. His description of the people though not as accurate as that of Heun Tsiang, is valuable inasmuch as it corroborates some statements made by Kalhana with regard to the foundation of temples and *viharas*. He mentions the three routes leading to the Valley and speaks of more than three hundred Buddhist convents there.

With the decline of the power of the T'ang dynasty, the political relations between China and the northern kingdoms of India seem to have ceased. The pilgrimage of Chinese Buddhists continued during the next two centuries but no detailed account bearing on Kashmir has been given by them in their travel diaries.

The early Muhammadan writers are our next foreign informants regarding the history and geography of Kashmir. The seclusion of the Valley and the policy of exclusiveness adopted by its rulers from the

end of 9th century A.D. are probably responsible for scanty references to this kingdom by the Arab writers. It was only in the early part of the 11th century that we have a remarkably accurate account of its geography and political set-up in Arabic from the pen of Alberuni.

The great Muhammadan scholar visited northern India in the train of Mahmud Ghazni and his interest in Kashmir was roused by the reports that following his master's victories, "the Hindus had fled to places which our hand cannot yet reach; to Kashmir, Banaras and other places."<sup>1</sup> In another passage he mentions Banaras and Kashmir as the high schools of the Hindu sciences.

Mahmud could not conquer Kashmir and this prevented Alberuni from visiting the Valley personally. He seems, however, to have secured the services of some Kashmirian scholars to teach him Sanskrit. Alberuni's main account of Kashmir is contained in Chapter XVIII of his book, *India*. Compared with the description of the rest of India, it is disproportionately detailed. He mentions the routes, the mountains, rivers, lakes and the fortresses. He also gives an account of the composition of its population, their dress, agriculture, arts and crafts.

The first Europeans to visit Kashmir were Father Gerome Xavier, a Navarese of high birth, and Benoist de Gois who appeared at the court of Akbar and accompanied the Emperor to Kashmir. Short sketches of Kashmir and its people have been recorded by Father Xavier which were published in Antwerp in 1605. It appears that the Valley was then in the grip of a severe famine. The harrowing plight of the victims as witnessed by Father Xavier were recorded by the Portuguese priest Pierre du Jarric in his interesting account of Akbar and his court.

We have, however, a more detailed and accurate account of Kashmir under the Mughals from the pen of the French physician, Francis Bernier, who accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir in 1665. In his famous *Letters* he gives interesting details of the route the royal cavalcade followed from Delhi to Kashmir. His portrayal of the habits and life of Kashmiris appears as real now as it was then. Bernier's observations are helpful in forming a picture of the economic and social life of Kashmir during the rule of the Imperial Mughals.

The next European traveller of note to write on Kashmir was the Jesuit Priest, the Italian Hippolyte, Desideri who hailed from Pistoia near Florence. In November 1714 he reached Srinagar and was struck by the beauty of the landscape around him. He has left us an account of the various handicraft products, notably shawls, of Kashmir. His

1 *India*, translated by Sachau, p. 206 sqq.



recorded experiences during the winter of 1715 which he had to pass in Srinagar before he left for Ladakh next year, are both graphic and interesting.

We are indebted to George Forster, an officer of the Bengal Army, for his detailed eye-witness account of conditions prevailing in Kashmir during the chaotic rule of the Afghans. While on his way to St. Petersburg in Russia by the land route, he entered Kashmir in 1783. He had to spend some time in the Valley and received a harsh treatment at the hands of the Afghan ruler of the time. His account, though brief, of the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir then, is of considerable value, being the sole testimony of an independent foreign traveller of the miserable state of the country and people during those days.

Afghans were followed by the Sikhs who ruled for a brief period of twenty-seven years—1819-46. Valuable accounts of their rule and the condition of the people under them have been left to us by several European travellers to the Valley, particularly Vigne (1835) who, besides the general description of the Valley, gives details of the devastating earthquake of 1828, the memory of which was still fresh in the minds of the people. Vigne also narrates interesting folklore, and the odd superstitions. Moorcraft, another traveller, besides giving a general description of Kashmir and Ladakh, narrates the political and economic set-up prevailing in Kashmir then. He gives an interesting account of the shawl trade which had reached its peak. Interesting and illuminating travel diaries have been also left by Baron Hugel and Baron von Schonberg who visited the Valley during this time.

In 1846, the Valley came under the Dogra rulers of Jammu and the suzerainty of the British India Government. It is from this time onwards that a close and scientific survey was conducted of the State's geography, physical features, history, antiquities, and ethnology and composition of its people. Outstanding contributions on these subjects were made by Drew, Lawrence and Cunningham—whose works form the bedrock of the study of Kashmir and its people.

Fredric Drew's *The Jammoo and Kashmir Territories*, published in 1875, deals with the detailed geography and physical features of the State, particularly of the Jammu region. Sir Walter Lawrence whose land settlement in the State marks a turning point in the economic and social history of its people, has left us in his *Valley of Kashmir* (published 1895), an authentic and illuminating record of the physical features of the Valley, its flora and fauna, and folk-lore, language, history, social customs and occupation of the people.

Alexander Cunningham's *Ladak* is a mine of information on the 'land of the Lamas'. It is an exhaustive survey of its geography, the ethnology of its people, their religion, social customs, history and economic set-up.

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE

We owe it to the secluded nature of the State and particularly of the Valley which is surrounded by high mountain ramparts, that abundant archaeological material is available to corroborate and at places to supplement the old chronicles and texts. "The Valley of Kashmir", says Lawrence, "is the 'holy land' of the Hindus and I have rarely been in any village which cannot show some relic of antiquity. Curious stone miniatures of the old Kashmir temples, huge stone seats of Mahadeo (*Badrapith*), phallic emblems innumerable, carved images heaped in grotesque confusion by some clear spring, have met me at every turn.

"I have seen curious mosques built in a style unlike the present, of wooden beams with stones between. Chance excavations, for irrigation and other works, reveal curious sculptures and interesting relics of ancient history."<sup>1</sup>

No wonder that travellers to Kashmir were struck by the huge edifices of ancient date which dotted the Valley. As early as the 7th century A.D., Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong mentioned a number of temples and *viharas*. Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* and Abul Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari* noticed several old temples and mosques. But a systematic survey and study of the ancient ruins and coins of the State fell to the lot of European archaeologists and research scholars who came to the State from the middle of the 19th century.

The first in this line was General (then Captain) Alexander Cunningham whom political duty had taken to the Valley in 1846 after the First Sikh War and the establishment of the Dogra rule over Kashmir. Though his stay was short and primarily devoted to a survey of the conspicuous temple ruins still extant, he succeeded in identifying correctly a number of important ancient sites such as Puranadishthana, the 'old capital', Jyestheshvara, Martanda, Padmapura, Pattana, Khonamusha, etc.

His survey of the old Hindu temple ruins threw light on the history of buildings mentioned in the Chronicles of Kalhana and later Sanskrit historians. He discussed at length the development of their architectural style with its Greek and Roman influences.<sup>2</sup> Subsequently

1 *Valley of Kashmir*, pp. 161-62.

2 "Essay on the Arian Order of Architecture as depicted in the temples of Kashmir", JASB, 1848, pp. 243-327.

he dealt this subject at length in the chapter on the 'Kingdom of Kashmir' in his *Ancient Geography of India*.

Cunningham's researches roused a good deal of interest in the ancient remains in the Valley and in 1865 Bishop W.G. Cowie, Chaplain on duty in Kashmir, studied more temple ruins, especially those not described by Cunningham.<sup>1</sup>

A few years later in 1869 Major Henry Hardy Cole, Superintendent of the Archaeological Survey of India, took photographs and prepared illustrations of most of the ancient temple ruins and published them in 1870. Some of these ruins are now no more but they are preserved in Cole's sketches and photographs.

The fruitful results of these early archaeological studies induced some enthusiastic amateurs who visited Kashmir as tourists or lent officers, to conduct minor excavations at a few sites. In 1865, for instance, excavations at Avantipura were undertaken by the Kashmir Government at the suggestion of Bishop Cotton and a few sculptures were unearthed.<sup>2</sup> In 1882, Mr. Garrick, formerly of the Archaeological Survey of India, carried out extensive excavations at Ushkur (ancient Huvishkapura) near Baramula, where he excavated a tope or stupa of squared stones, held together with iron clamps.<sup>3</sup> Similarly in 1891, a little digging done by Lawrence at Narasthan brought to light interesting specimens of old sculpture.

But it was George Buhler's memorable tour of Kashmir in 1875 that resulted in the discovery of valuable material for a systematic study of the history of Kashmir. Although primarily engaged in collection and examination of old Sanskrit and Persian manuscripts, he gave graphic and accurate notices of some old sites in the Valley which he had visited himself. He realized the importance of a reconstruction of the historical topography for a thorough and critical study of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, and indicated in his *Report* the manner in which a systematic study of these should be taken up.

Dr. Stein followed his method and thanks to his sustained labours we have a comprehensive knowledge of the antiquities of the Valley. The result of his archaeological survey in the summers of 1888-90 is contained in his famous *Memoir on the Ancient Geography of Kashmir*. A reference to his notes like those on the castle of Lohara, on the re-discovery of the long forgotten *tirtha* of Bheda, on the old confluence

1 JASB, 1866, Part I.

2 Duke, *Handbook*, p. 304.

3 Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 162.



of the Vitasta and Sindu, etc., will help to realize the interest he took in this kind of search and also time and trouble it frequently cost him. By his devoted work Stein has shown the close and important link that most of these ruins form in the chain of data for a study of the history of this ancient land and its people.

An exhaustive survey of the Muhammadan buildings and mosques of medieval Kashmir was made by W.H. Nicholls who, in his interesting paper, drew attention to the distinct wooden architecture introduced into Kashmir after the advent of Muslim rule in the 13th century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

With the establishment of the Department of Archaeology by the State Government towards the beginning of the present century, a programme of preserving ancient sites and ruins was taken in hand and a museum was set up in Srinagar. Some excavations were undertaken notably at Avantipura, Ushkur and Martand.<sup>2</sup> Exquisite specimens of terra-cotta figures of the Gandhara art were discovered at Ushkur and sculptures of a mixed Gandhara and Gupta schools of art at Avantipura and Verinag. Huge earthen jars to store grain were also discovered at Avantipura.

The most remarkable discovery was, however, made at Harwan near the famous Shalimar garden, 12 miles to the east of Srinagar, where under the guidance of R.C. Kak, Superintendent of the Department, extensive excavations were undertaken in 1925. Foundations of old temples datable to the 3rd-4th centuries A.D. were unearthed, as also a large courtyard of terra-cotta tiles bearing figures with representation of Central Asian features and dress.<sup>3</sup> In 1942 the Department also undertook excavations at Tapar, 22 miles from Srinagar and four miles from Pattan. The ruins of the base of a temple came to light and inscriptions in fragments found there helped to fix the date of its erection in the reign of Parmanudeva (12th century A.D.).<sup>4</sup>

One of the most interesting excavations which reveal data on pre-historic period of Kashmir were recently conducted at the ancient menhir site of Burzahom, ten miles to the east of Srinagar.

It was in 1935 that De Terra, leader of the Yale-Cambridge Expedition excavated a trial trench at the base of one of the megaliths at Burzahom. He was rewarded by finds of early pointed-butt stone axes, highly black polished ware, polished cells of traps, hoes, pestle, and

1 Ann. Rep. ASI, 1906-7.

2 Sahni, D.R., *Excavations at Avantipura*, Ann. Report. ASI, II, 1913-14, pp. 40-62.

3 Kak, R.C., *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*, p. 109.

4 Sufi, G.M.D., *Kashir*, p. 51.

bone implements. At the bottom, a neolithic hearth was also noticed.<sup>1</sup> The cultural pattern of Burzahom is, Gordon points out, similar to that of Maski and Brahmagiri and shows a stone axe culture starting perhaps as early as 1200 B.C.<sup>2</sup>

The digging was abandoned before reaching the natural *karewa* silt, and Burzahom continued to remain an enigma.

When in 1960 the Archaeological Survey of India which a year earlier had taken over the State Department of Archaeology, undertook systematic excavations at this ancient site, there were no misgivings as to valuable data on pre-historic culture coming to light there. Sectional diggings have revealed the existence of pit dwellings, datable (tentatively) to 3000 B.C. Besides, a large number of stone implements, some highly polished ware, bone implements like awls, eyed needles, and spatulas have been found.

If archaeological discoveries have thrown valuable light on the history of Kashmir, no less fruitful results have followed the close and systematic study of its old coins—gold, silver, copper and brass—found in and outside the State. Right from the time of Kanishka there is numismatic evidence of a chain of kings up to modern times.

General Cunningham was the first to take up this study. He collected during his stay in the Valley, a large number of ancient coins and as a result of a close study of these and other finds, he was able to elucidate a series of important questions bearing on the chronological system of the *Rajatarangini* and on the numismatic history of Kashmir. In a paper published in the *Numismatic Chronicle* for 1846 he communicated the results of his search for ancient Kashmirian coins and proved by their analysis the great value of numismatic evidence for the critical control of Kalhana's and other records.<sup>3</sup>

Some more scholarly studies of Kashmir coins have resulted in useful data being collected on the chronology of the Sultans and other Muslim kings of the 14th to 19th centuries. Among such studies is that of C.J. Rogers.<sup>4</sup> Sir Aùrel Stein<sup>5</sup> and R.B. Whitehead<sup>6</sup> also made

1 Terra, H. De, 'Excavations at Burzahom', *Miscellanea of the American Philosophical Soc.* (1936).

2 *Ancient India*, ASI, No. 9, p. 73.

3 "The Ancient Coinage of Kashmir, with Chronological and Historical Notes," *The Numismatic Chronicle and Journal of the Numismatic Society*, 1846 No. XX, pp. 1 Sq.

4 *The Copper Coins of the Sultans of Kashmir*, JASB, 1879, XI-viii, 277-85. *The Square Silver Coins of the Sultans of Kashmir*, JASB, 1885, pp. 92-139.

5 Stein, 'Notes on Monetary System of Ancient Kashmir', *Numismatic Chronicle*, XIX, pp. 125-74.

6 Whitehead, R.B., 'The Gold Coins of Kashmir', *Chronicle and Journal of the Royal Numismatic Society* (London), 5th Series, Vol. 13, pp. 257-67.

considerable contributions to the knowledge of ancient history by a study of old Kashmir coins.

Of considerable interest are the finds of hoards of Sri Pratapa type of coins of the 8th century A.D. from as distant places as Bhitware, Dist. Fyzabad, from Rajghat and Sarnath, in the confines of Banaras, from Monghyr District and from the ancient university site of Nalanda, Patna District. The place-finds confirm the statement of Kalhana about Lalitaditya's campaigns and chronology.<sup>1</sup>

Light from another independent source has been thrown on the ancient history of the Valley and its political and cultural relations with kingdoms of Central Asia, Tibet and Gandhara. In 1890 Col. Bower discovered a birch-bark manuscript at Kucha. In 1904 the German expeditions under Dr Von Le Coq and later under Dr Grundwedel made valuable discoveries of Buddhist art and Sanskrit manuscripts on birch-bark from the old Tokhara country of Kucha, Karashahr and Turfan. The French Sinologist M. Pelliot visited Turkistan in 1906-8 and discovered Sanskrit manuscripts written in the Tang period. He also discovered Buddhist mural paintings of the 7th-10th centuries at Tun-huang. The old manuscripts were written in Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit and the Kushan dialects on birch-bark which was no doubt exported to Central Asia from Kashmir.<sup>2</sup>

Sir Aurel Stein's archaeological explorations in Chinese Turkistan in 1901, 1906-8 and 1913-16, yielded rich material showing the important part Kashmir played as an advance post of Indian culture. The mass of Stein's collections of domestic objects, antiquities of terracotta, stucco and other material which has been arranged in the Central Asian Museum in New Delhi, exhibit the deep influence of Buddhist religion and art carried to those regions mostly by Kashmirian missionaries.<sup>3</sup>

Similarly excavations of Sir John Marshall at Taxila unearthed enough proof to establish the close cultural and economic ties between Kashmir and Gandhara in ancient times when, as Heun Tsiang records, Taxila was a part of the kingdom of Kashmir.

Rev. A.H. Francke's archaeological explorations in 1909 in Lahoul, Ladakh, Zaskar and Purig brought to light a number of Buddhist shrines, monasteries with wood carvings and other antiquities, which established the relations—political, religious and cultural—that the

1 JRAS, 1906, p. 843 ; JASB, N.S. 1928, p. 6-9 ; JNSI, X, Part I, p. 30-32 ; Ann. Rep. ASI, (Eastern Circle) 1919-20, p. 48.

2 Pandit, R.S., *The River of Kings*, pp. 605-6.

3 Stein, *Ancient Khotan*, 1907 ; *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, 1912 ; *Serindia*, 1921 ; *Innermost Asia*, 1928.



people of Kashmir had with those of this region.<sup>1</sup> J. Ph. Vogel's search after inscriptions and antiquities of Chamba, while throwing light on the history of that neighbouring principality, showed its close relations with Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> The Lakshana Devi temple at Brahmor in Chamba was, it is established, repaired under Lalitaditya in Kashmir style.<sup>3</sup>

Perhaps the most important source of Kashmir history is the people who inhabit this beautiful land. Their traditions, customs and manners, folklore, language, dress, food and other habits, to which they have tenaciously held from ancient times, present an open book of history. For, we cannot overlook the fact that Kashmir's is the history of a living people with their joys and sorrows, hopes and fears which makes its study all the more interesting and instructive.

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1 *Antiquities of Indian Tibet*, 1914-26.

2 *Inscriptions of Chamba State*, 1902-3 ; *Antiquities of Chamba State*, 1911.

3 Goetz: 'Art of Lalitaditya', *Art and Letters*, Vol. XXVII, No.1.

## CHAPTER THREE

### PREHISTORIC AND EARLY PERIOD

GEOLOGICAL EVIDENCE and mythological traditions agree that the Valley of Kashmir was originally a lake hundreds of feet higher than the present valley bottom. The gorge through which the river Jhelum at present escapes near Baramula was then blocked up, and the whole Valley filled with what must have been the most lovely lake in the world, "twice the length and three times the width of the Lake of Geneva and completely encircled by snowy mountains as high and higher than Mont Blanc ; while in the immediately following glacial period mighty glaciers came wending down the Sindh, Lidder, and other valleys, even to the very edge of water."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE LEGEND

The legends about the origin of the Valley are remarkably unanimous in referring to its having been a vast inland lake formed of the waters from the melting of ice and snow on the high mountain peaks surrounding it. According to *Nilamatpurana* which is the oldest record of the legend and to which Kalhana refers in his *Rajatarangini*, the lake was called Satisaras, the 'lake of Sati', and occupied the place of Kashmir from the beginning of the Kalpa. In the period of the seventh Manu the demon Jalodbhava ('water-born'), who resided in the lake, caused great distress to all neighbouring regions by his devastations. The sage Kashyapa, the father of all Nagas, while on his pilgrimage in the north of India, heard of the cause of this distress from his son Nila, the King of the Kashmir Nagas. The sage determined to punish the evil-doer, proceeded to Brahma to implore his and other gods' help for this purpose. His prayer was granted. All the gods by Brahma's command started for the Satisaras and took up their position on the lofty peaks above Kaunsarnag. The demon, who was invincible in his own element, refused to come forth from the lake. Vishnu, thereupon, called upon his brother Balabhadra to drain the lake which he did by piercing the mountains with his ploughshare. When the lake had dried up, Jalodbhava was attacked by Vishnu and after a fierce combat slain with His war-disc.

Kashyapa then settled the land of Kashmir which had thus been produced. The gods took up their abode in it as well as the Nagas,

<sup>1</sup> Younghusband, *Kashmir*, p. 226.

while the various goddesses adorned the land in the shape of rivers. At first men dwelt in it for only six months in the year owing to a curse of Kashyapa, who, angered by the Nagas, had condemned them to dwell for the other six months with the Pisachas. The men thus left the Valley for the six months of winter and returned in Caitra (March-April) when Pisachas withdrew. Ultimately when four Yugas had passed, the Brahman Candradeva through Nila Naga's favour acquired a number of rites which freed the country from the Pisachas and excessive cold. Henceforth Kashmir became habitable throughout the year.<sup>1</sup>

Another version of the legend in Bhuddhistic form is alluded to by Heun Tsiang.<sup>2</sup> Its main features as related in the *Nilamatpurana*, live to this day in popular tradition. They are also reproduced in all Muhammadan abstracts of the *Rajatarangini*.<sup>3</sup> From Malik Haider's *Twarikh*, the legend became known to Bernier and has since found its way into almost every account of Kashmir.<sup>4</sup>

Drew recognised clearly the true relation between the legend and those physical facts which seem to support the belief that Kashmir was in comparatively late geological times wholly or in great part occupied by a vast lake. "The traditions," he says, "of the natives—traditions that can be historically traced as having existed for ages—tend in the direction of the Vale having been occupied by a lake, and these have usually been considered to corroborate the conclusions drawn from the observed phenomena. Agreeing as I do with the conclusion, I cannot count the traditions as perceptibly strengthening it; I have little doubt that they themselves originated in the same physical evidence that later travellers have examined."<sup>5</sup>

The geological observations upon which modern scientific inquirers have based their belief as to the former existence of a great lake, are the undoubted lacustrine deposits found in the *karewas* or plateaus in the Valley. These deposits though of no remote date, speaking by a geological standard, are far older than any monuments of man that have yet been discovered.

#### PREHISTORIC

Whether man ever saw the lovely Satisaras, is not yet possible to say. Prehistoric explorations in the Valley have revealed the occur-

1 A detailed extract of the *Nilamatpurana* story has been given by Buhler, *Report*, p. 39.

2 See *Si-u-ki*, trans. Beal, i. p. 149.

3 Compare, e.g. *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii. p. 380 ; Wilson's, *Essay*, p. 93.

4 See Bernier, *Travels*, Ed. Constable, p. 393.

5 *Jummoo*, p. 207.



rence of the Quaternary Glacial Cycles. The lacustrine deposits called *karewas* are geological formations of the Ice Age. These overlay the terminal moraines of the first glaciation and are comprised of two groups, lower and upper, differentiated by the moraines of the second glaciation.

The fossil remains of *Elephas hysudricus* have been found in the lower *karewas* pointing to Lower Pleistocene age. The intervening moraines are geologically similar to the boulder conglomerates of Potwar region (District Rawalpindi, Pakistan) which contain Pre-Sohan tools. The upper *karewa* beds represent the second interglacial age and can be equated with similar deposits in the Sohan valley, which present pebble tools, the products of the Early Sohan industry. No palaeolithic tool has, however, been found in the Valley so far and human occupation in Pleistocene Kashmir has still to be proved.<sup>1</sup>

The mesolithic or the proto-neolithic period appears to be indicated by the findings of De Terra and Paterson in the Jhelum valley of Kashmir "of great numbers of artificially flaked stones, among which were flakes and cores reminiscent of palaeolithic technique", including the Levalloisian; "but in all these places it was certain that the flakes are associated with pottery-bearing layers of either neolithic or historic date."<sup>2</sup>

The neolithic culture is indicated by the discovery of ground and polished stone axes, hoes, pestles and bone implements, at the well known menhir site of Burzahom, ten miles east of Srinagar. Burzahom is famous as one of the only two megalithic sites in the extreme north-west of the Indian sub-continent. We do not know the exact cultural horizon of the Burzahom megaliths nor the purpose for which they were erected, but the indications are that they were put in place towards the end of the neolithic period at that site, probably between, 400 and 300 B.C.<sup>3</sup>

The original plan of the monument is uncertain. Five very massive stones leaning badly were roughly in position of a semi-circle open to the east when they were dislodged following the recent excavations at the site. Three others lie in a semi-circle partly buried and clearly moved from the place in which they were erected.

While digging a trial trench at the site, De Terra found a highly black polished ware at about five feet in the section. On insufficient data he associated it with the Indus Valley, but with our present-day

1 Ray, Sunil Chandra, *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 190

2 De Terra and Paterson, *Studies on the Ice Age in India*, pp. 230 and 310-11

3 Gordon, D.H., *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*, p. 183



Burzahom excavations, showing successive floor levels



Neoliths from Burzahom





Neolithic bone tools from Burzahom



knowledge of Northern Black Polished Ware<sup>1</sup> the sherd can be ascribed to the early historic period. In the unweathered post-glacial loess below this level up to 12 feet and more, a proto-neolithic industry consisting of ground stone celts, bone awls and pots was found. This industry, of an apparently great antiquity as the depth of post-glacial loess would indicate, was discounted by Paterson at Nunar,  $7\frac{1}{2}$  miles north-west of Burzahom. The cultural pattern of this industry is similar to that of Maski and Brahmagiri and shows a stone-axe culture starting perhaps as early as 1200 B.C.<sup>2</sup>

De Terra abandoned digging before reaching the natural *karawa* silt.<sup>3</sup> It was in 1960 that the Archaeological Survey of India began systematic excavations at this enigmatic site. Near about the silt bed, pits have been discovered in section, indicating a settlement of early pit-dwellers, whose date has been tentatively fixed at 3000 B.C. This is perhaps the only known find of such settlement in India and indications are that more valuable data will be found when extensive surface diggings are completed.

Besides Burzahom the only other places where a few ground and polished stone axes were found are Orangi, not far from Karachi, Mohenjo-daro, and Sirkap at Taxila. Once we leave this arc, not a single stone axe had been found for hundreds of miles in all directions until two turned up at Nevasa in the Ahmadnagar District. Throughout the Punjab and Rajputana, the whole area of the Deccan and eastward to the sea between the Mahanadi and the Krishna, these are the only ground and polished stone axes yet to be found. But in the south of the Krishna, Amaravati and South Arcot Districts, these implements are found in abundance. There must be some relation between this culture in the north and south of India. Gordon dates these axes between c. 2000 and 800 B.C.<sup>4</sup>

Who were these people and wherefrom did they come are questions to which nobody has as yet hazarded an answer. Much more work is needed before firm conclusions can be reached as regards the date and historical significance of these neolithic and chalcolithic peoples; even so it will be of value to state the problems and indicate the general direction to which the evidence points. Ground and polished stone axes have been found in abundance in the region which includes the Raichur District of Hyderabad, the Bellary District of Madras and the northern

1 Northern Black Polished Ware, commonly called N.B.P., is a ceramic with considerable dating importance.

2 *Ancient India*, ASI, No. 9, 1935, p. 73

3 De Terra, H., 'Excavations at Burzahom', *Miscelanea of the American Philosophical Society*, 1936.

4 Gordon, D. H., *The Prehistoric Background of Indian Culture*, p. 33.

part of the Chitaldrug District of Mysore. Regular excavations particularly at Brahmagiri in Chitaldrug have shown these axes to be associated with a handmade neolithic ware and that type of flake-blade industry. The finds at Burzahom closely resemble these neolithic tools and ware. Whether or if at all these cultures in the extreme north and south of India had a contact is a point on which not much light has been thrown. The neolithic culture in South India has been traced upwards to Maheshwar the great route junction from Delhi, Bombay and Poona on the banks of the Narmada. But beyond this we find little of this culture till we come to Burzahom.

Here then we may again take the help of the legend as recorded in the *Nilamatpurana*, which mentions settling in the Valley of people from the south by Sage Kashyapa. The earliest settlers were thus both from the northern regions of Ladakh and Dardistan and also from the plains of India, the latter finding the cold climate of the Valley unbearable in winter and hence withdrawing to the warmer regions of the Chenab valley and Jammu. Similarly the people from the inhospitable regions of the north and east found it warmer in winter and rather hot in summer when they would repair to the upper reaches of the mountains leaving the southerners at peace in the Valley.<sup>1</sup> Gradually the latter got acclimatized and settled permanently in the Valley driving away the troublesome tribes from the mountain regions to their original habitat.

#### THE ARYANS

That the Kashmiris form a branch of the race which brought the languages of the Indo-Aryan type into India, is a fact established by the evidence of their language and physical appearance.

In the absence of any other reliable record of the early settlers of the Valley, it would be interesting to follow the line of linguistic affinities of the tribes on its borders. The various dialects spoken by the people of Ladakh, Baltistan, Dardistan and Kashmir Valley are closely allied to the Dardic language. Dr Grierson's research into these languages has proved that Kashmiri has a Dardic base. The common ancestors of the Indo-Aryans appear to have followed up the

<sup>1</sup> The following interesting statement about the inhabitants of Rupshu would apply to these early nomad settlers in the Valley : "Further east (of Padar) across the glaciers lies the inaccessible country of Zaskar where the people and cattle live indoors for six months out of the year, where trees are scarce and food is scarcer. Farther east is Rupshu, the lowest point of which is 13,500 feet. In Rupshu live the nomad Champas, who are able to work in an air of extraordinary rarity and complain bitterly of the heat of Leh (11,500 feet)!" *Imperial Gazetteer*, Vol. XV, p. 73.

course of the Oxus and the Jaxartes into the high-lying country round Khokand where a portion of them separated from others marching south over the western passes of the Hindukush into the valley of river Kabul and thence into the plains of India where they settled as the ancestors of the present Indo-Aryans. The Aryans who remained behind on the north of the Hindukush and who did not share into the migration to the Kabul valley spread eastwards and westwards. Those who migrated to the east occupied the Pamirs and now speak Ghalchah.

After the great fission which separated the main body of the Indo-Aryans from the Iranians, another branch shoots off and settles in what is called Dardistan. The word Dard is an ancient one and is of frequent occurrence in the early Sanskrit geographical works and *Puranas*. Greeks and Romans included under the name of the Dard country the whole mountainous tracts between the Hindukush and the frontiers of India proper. The Aryan languages spoken in this region are, therefore, called Dardic. They are Kafir, Chitrali, Shina, Kashmiri and Kohistani.<sup>1</sup>

Though it is rather hazardous to base the settlement of the Aryan immigrants in the Valley from the north purely on the evidence of linguistic movement, yet other factors particularly physical and ethnic also point to the same conclusion. So far no ethnological survey of the Kashmiri people has been conducted, and we have only to depend upon superficial and general affinities, which clearly point to their being physically allied to the people living in the region of Chitral, Gilgit, Afghanistan and Punjab. These Nordics who infiltrated into Kashmir are identical with the ancestors of the Dard speaking tribes, the Paisachas of the Sanskrit literature.

Several races entered into Kashmir later, the earliest being the Aryan settlers speaking Sanskrit from the Punjab and other parts of India who according to the *Nilamatpurana* legend had, for a long time, to face the opposition of the Pisachas and Yakshas from the north. Further we have historical evidence to the settlement of later immigrants of the Persian, Greek and Yu-echi or Turkish descent, the latter coming before and during Kanishka's rule. Tibetans seem also to have come in considerable numbers.

The purity of race, which has often been noted as distinguishing the great mass of the population of Kashmir, may be admitted with a qualification. It is probably due not only to the isolated nature of the State, but also to the curious faculty of absorbing foreign elements. Colonies of Mughals, Pathans, Punjabis and Paharis settled within

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1 Grierson, *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol. VIII, Part II.



comparatively recent times in the Valley, have been amalgamated with remarkable rapidity through inter-marriage and other means.

The ethnography of the regions surrounding the Valley can be traced clearly from the *Rajatarangini*. In the south and west the adjacent hill regions were occupied by the Khasas. Their settlements extended in a semicircle from Kishtwar in the south-east to the Jhelum valley in the west. The hill states of Rajauri and Poonch were held by Khasa families; the dynasty of the latter territory succeeded to the rule of Kashmir in the eleventh century. North of the Jhelum valley and as far as Muzaffarabad we find the Bombas as the neighbours of Khasas (later Khakhas) to whom they are closely related. It is probable that Karnah district was held by them already in old times. The upper Kishengana valley above the famous shrine of Sarada was in old days already, as at present, peopled by Dards who are often referred to by Kalhana as the neighbours of Kashmir on the north. Their seats extended then, too, probably much further to the north-west, where they are now found in Chitral, Yasin, Gilgit and the intervening region towards Kashmir. Megasthenes already knew them in the Upper Indus regions. Kalhana relating events of his own time speaks of Malechhas further to the north. These might have been Muhammadanised Dards on the Indus and beyond.

The regions immediately to the north-east and east of Kashmir were held by the Bhauttas. These are the modern Bhutta of Dras, Ladakh and the neighbouring districts.<sup>1</sup>

### THE 'RIVER OF KINGS'

Kalhana begins his history with an invocation to Lord Siva in His manifestation as Lord Ardnarishvara. This form of invocation is significant showing as it does the dominance in the 12th century A.D. of the Saiva school of philosophy, originally founded by Vasagupta and developed by scholars like Somananda, Utpalacharya, Abhinavagupta and others.

In his introductory verses he eulogises the services of preceding historians who by recording past events and personalities had rendered a great service to posterity. From a study of these records future generations are able to draw moral and political lessons of immense value.

He also makes a mention of the sources of his history. He particularly deplores the loss of detailed records on account of Suvrata's condensed historical *sutras*. Students generally chose the easier path

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1 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, pp. 429-32,

of committing this digest to memory in preference to a study of detailed and exhaustive history, with the result that the latter was neglected and lost.

He then mentions eleven historical works extant at the time and critically examines their merit. He details other historical data, such as old coins, dedicatory notices, inscriptions on temples and on other religious endowments, which he made use of to check and elucidate the events recorded by earlier historians.

Coming to the subject proper, Kalhana extols the merits of Kashmir and lists five features for which it was famous :

“Learning, lofty houses, saffron, icy water and grapes ;

things that even in heaven are difficult to find are common there.”

That Kashmir was from ancient times the seat of Sanskrit literature is borne out by the testimony of Heun Tsiang, who visited the Valley five centuries earlier. “The people of Kashmir,” he writes, “love learning and are well cultured. Since centuries learning has been held in great reverence in Kashmir.” During the course of the past two thousand years Kashmiri scholars and poets produced works on philosophy, poetry, drama, rhetoric, grammar, poetics and folk-lore.

The grand ruins of ancient temples dotting the Valley are sufficient evidence of the qualities of Kashmiris as architects and sculptors. During Muslim rule also, when timber replaced stone as the chief building material, Kashmiris distinguished themselves by constructing lofty houses. Mirza Haider Dughlat (1540 A.D.) in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* admires the skill of Kashmiri craftsmen in the art of building. He specially mentions “lofty buildings constructed of fresh cut pine.” Most of these were five storeys high. The beauty of their exterior defied description and “all who behold them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration.”

From ancient times saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir and therefore it is called *Kashmiraja* in Sanskrit.

Kalhana goes on to name certain *tirthas* and springs which bestowed holiness on Kashmir. Most of these can be located even today and are held in great veneration by the Kashmiris. The reference to the Nagas is particularly interesting. According to the popular belief in Kashmir, these are considered to be snakes living in the waters of springs and lakes over which they keep guard. They also appear in human form or as clouds or hailstorms. To this day springs are generally called *Nag* in Kashmir.

The Vitasta and its source, Nilakunda, have also been mentioned. Vitasta, which serves as the highway from the south to the north of the

Valley, is the chief river and supplies through canals and streams water for the irrigation of most of the paddy land. It is but natural that a feeling of reverence amounting to worship should have prevailed among the people for this river. The author of the *Vitasta Mahatmya* thus sings its praise :

“The righteous declare this terrestrial  
globe as the best of the triad  
(as in this one can practise  
penances and attain salvation),  
Of that, too, the mountain (Himalayas),  
chosen by the Mother of the Three Worlds  
(Parvati) to take her birth in ;  
Of that, too, the country of Kashmir—  
the abode of blessings, free from all calamities—  
Through this country thou, O Vitasta,  
flowest, benefiting the people (and)  
I offer unto thee my salutation.”

Kalhana briefly refers to the origin of this Valley—how it was at one time an inland sea called Satisaras which when drained by Rishi Kashyapa was named Kashmir.

It is difficult to judge critically the value of Kalhana's account of the kings who came before Ashoka for there is no independent supporting evidence forthcoming either from within or from the neighbouring territories of Kashmir. In discussing these kings he seems to have followed and explained the local names of kings, real or imaginary, and these continue to influence Kashmir's popular traditions to the present day.

The history of the Valley has been considerably influenced by the relations which Kashmir had from an early date with the Punjab and other hill states by virtue of the community of race, religion and culture and at times political dependence. But unfortunately the knowledge about the early history of these territories is fragmentary and in need of critical study. Hence it is difficult to make out anything resembling an exhaustive treatment of the political and cultural development of the Valley from the early part of the Chronicle.

Kalhana begins the Chronicle with an account of King GONANDA I, whose initial year of reign he places in 653 Kali, the traditional date of the coronation of King Yudhisthira, the Pandava leader.

What Kalhana has to tell us of Gonanda I and his three successors is that he was one of the relations of Jarasanda, the king of Magadha. He was a good and just king. When Jarasanda was in battle with Krishna on the banks of the Yamuna, Gonanda at the



head of a large army, went to his aid and besieged Krishna in a fortress. His men fought bravely for a long time but they were routed and he himself was killed by Balabhadra, the brother of Krishna.

After his death his son, DAMODRA, sat on the throne. Filled with ideas of revenge for his father's death, he waited until Krishna and the other scions of Yadu visited Gandhara on the Indus on the occasion of the *Svayamvara* of the King's daughter. Damodra led an expedition against him, and attacked Krishna. He fought bravely but was killed. His wife YASOVATI who was then enceinte was made the queen-regent of Kashmir at Krishna's advice.

Here Kalhana casually remarks that the nobles and advisers grumbled that a woman had been crowned queen. But Lord Krishna appeased them by reciting the following verse from the *Nilamat-purana* :

"Kashmir is Parvati ; know that its king is  
a portion of Siva, Though he be wicked,  
a wise man who desires his own prosperity  
will not despise him."

This calmed the turbulent nobles who thereafter treated Yasovati like a goddess and as "the mother of the subjects."

When the queen bore a son, he was named GONANDA II and crowned king in his infancy. About this time the great war of the Mahabharata was fought and as Gonanda II was young his assistance was not sought by either the Kauravas or the Pandavas. This explains the absence of any mention of the country and its ruler in the accounts of the "Great War".

#### 'LOST KINGS'

Kalhana then abruptly says that after Gonanda II, "thirty-five kings who follow him have been immersed in the ocean of oblivion, their names and deeds having perished through the destruction of the records."

There have been certain attempts to fill the gap by later historians. Hasan, the author of the Persian *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, who wrote in the latter half of the 19th century, has an interesting story to tell of how he came by the account of these 'lost kings'.

According to him, during the time of Zain-ul-abidin (1420-70 A.D.), a few pages of an earlier work by a historian named Ratnakara were discovered which contained the names of these kings and a short account of their reigns. Subsequently, King Zain-ul-abidin had them incorpo-

rated in Mulla Ahmad's Persian translation of the *Rajatarangini*. Hasan claims that he obtained a copy of Mulla Ahmad's history from a Kashmiri emigrant at Rawalpindi and on that authority was able to give an account of these kings in his own history.

Current legends correspond to the accounts of these 'lost kings,' as given by Hasan, but these are not once mentioned in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

For instance, the Kashmiris believe that kings belonging to the Pandava dynasty had once ruled Kashmir, and twenty-three of these 'lost kings' are said to belong to this dynasty. The ruins of old temples are popularly called Pandav-Lari or the buildings of the Pandavas.

Ptolemy VII, 1, 6, calls the country between the Jhelum and the Ravi, with the city of Sagala (present Sialkot), as the country of Pandavas. This is also mentioned in the *Bassarica* of Dionysius. As they are not known to have played any part, or been mentioned in history during any period in which Greeks were acquainted with India, they must refer to either the heroes of the epic or some dynasty after the Mahabharata war. The location of the name shows that it can have nothing to do with the kingdom of the Pandavas in the extreme south of the Indian Peninsula, which moreover, really came within the purview of the West about the time of Augustus.<sup>1</sup>

Popular legends about the submersion of a city under the Wular lake, or of Himal-Nagirai, or Bombar and Lolar are connected with stories of some of these lost kings.

The first of these kings was HARANADEV, the son of Parikshit, grandson of Arjuna, the third of the Pandava brothers. For some time he vainly contended with his brother, Janmejaya, for the kingdom of Hastinapura. Finding that he could not withstand his brother, Haranadev fled with a company of men towards the hills of Chamba. Here he found a hermit practising austere penances. Haranadev who had just been defeated by his brother and was therefore much depressed stayed on to wait on the hermit, who one day told him that he was destined to be the king of Kashmir. Thereupon, Haranadev went to Kashmir and entered the service of Gonanda II. By dint of his abilities, he gradually rose to the office of Prime Minister. He pleased the commandants of the army by his generosity. After some time, blinded by greed, he caused Gonanda to be murdered and supported by the courtiers usurped the throne, thus founding the Pandava dynasty of Kashmir.

<sup>1</sup> See Tarn, *The Greeks in Bactria and India*, pp. 381 and 511.

Haranadev ruled with a firm hand and with his generous disposition won the hearts of his subjects. Peace prevailed in the land and brought it prosperity. He is said to have reigned for 30 years.

A brief and fragmentary account of the reigns of the succeeding kings of this dynasty is given by Hasan. Some of these rulers are enshrined in popular traditions. For instance, the ancient temple on the Sankaracaraya hill is believed to have been built by SANDIMAN, one of these Pandava kings. It is said that he ruled over a vast territory extending from Kandahar to Kanauj. Another king, BHIMASEN, is said to have led his armies across the Karakoram and subjugated Khotan and other Central Asian cities.

The beautiful city of Sandimatnagar is believed to have been submerged under the waters of the Wular during the reign of SUNDERSEN, one of the kings of this dynasty. In his time, there was a general decline in the standard of morals and there appeared a hermit named Nanda Gupta, a potter by profession, who exhorted the people not to indulge in sinful deeds. But nobody would listen to him; on the contrary he was ridiculed and molested. The hermit then left them to their fate and himself retired to a nearby hill, still named Kralasangar (the potter's hill). Then one night a severe earthquake shook the city and water gushed out of the earth. The city was submerged and all its inhabitants drowned. Simultaneously, a portion of the hill came down and blocked the gorge at Baramula. This caused a backflow in the river turning the submerged city into a permanent lake.<sup>1</sup>

Kalhana, taking up the narrative, mentions the names of eight more kings, namely, LAVA, KUSHA, KHAGENDRA, SURENDRA, GODHARA, SUVARNA, JANAKA and SACHINARA, who had preceded Ashoka. As already mentioned most of these names are associated with the founding of towns and villages, some of which can still be traced. But nothing is known about the historicity of any of them.

#### ASHOKA

With ASHOKA we come to firm historical ground. Kalhana's account of this great king, though scanty, is of special interest. In spite of a number of surmises to the contrary, there is a consensus of opinion among the historians that the Ashoka of Kashmir history was the Emperor Ashoka of Magadha whose dominions extended eastward to Bengal and westward to Hindukush.

The doubt has been caused by the system of chronology followed by Kalhana, according to which Ashoka has been placed in 1182 B.C. Ashoka's date is fortunately one of the most authenticated in early

<sup>1</sup> Koul, Pandit Anand, *History of Kashmir*, JASB, N.S., 1919, pp. 195-219.



Indian history as falling in the middle of the 3rd century B.C. and if we give credence to Kalhana's chronological calculations, we should have to place him nine hundred years before his time.

It would be interesting here to examine and test the accuracy of chronology followed in the early parts of the *Rajatarangini* with regard to this first point of contact between Kalhana's narrative and the ascertained facts of general Indian history.

Kalhana takes as the starting point of his chronological calculations the traditional date indicated by Varahmihra's *Brihatsamhita* for the coronation of Yudhishthira, the Pandava hero of the epics, viz., 653 of the Kali era or 3100 B.C.

He records his chronology according to the *Laukika* or *Saptarshi* era, which is still in current use among the Brahman population of Kashmir. The commencement of this era is placed on *Caitra Shudi* first of Kali Sambat 25 (expired) or the year 3076-75 B.C.

The contents of Kalhana's history divide themselves into two great portions from the point of view of the critical tests which can apply to them as historical records. Book i to iii which contain a narrative of the earlier epoch is a record of successive Gonandiya dynasties whose rule is supposed by Kalhana to have filled an aggregate period of nearly 3050 years. The persons and events which figure in them can but rarely be traced in other sources and these too only with considerable variations as to date and character. The narrative of Books iv to viii which extends from the beginning of the Karkota dynasty (7th century A.D.) to Kalhana's own time, can be, however, checked in many important points by independent evidence from other sources, such as coins, inscriptions and notices of Indian and foreign writers.

In regard to the chronological information contained in the *Rajatarangini* it is essential to note that there is a marked difference between the forms in which this information is conveyed in the earlier, and in the later portions. In the earlier portion we have no chronological data except such as may be deduced from the stated length of individual reigns and a few general figures. On the other hand we find that from the concluding part of the Fourth Book onwards, the dates of accession of individual rulers and of other events of political or economic importance for the kingdom are indicated by the quotation of the exact years of *Laukika* era, coupled in most cases with equally precise statements of the month and date.

Both with regard to the assumption of 2268 years as the aggregate length of Gonanda I and his successors as detailed in Book i, and 2330 years of the aggregate duration of reigns from Gonanda III to his own date, Kalhana's chronology presents several inaccuracies which become

glaring after a closer study of the text itself. For instance, the average length of reigns of thirty-seven princes of the first three dynasties are 48 years and the average reigns of princes of Book ii and iii come to 32 and 59 years respectively, which is apparently too high, particularly when the average rule of kings of the later period does not exceed 12 years. In Book iii Kalhana gives fully 300 years to king Ranaditya's rule.

With regard to Kanishka and Mihirakula the two kings whose respective identity with the famous Kushan ruler of northern India and with the White Hun or Ephthalite ruler of that name, has been established, Kalhana's chronology does not stand a critical test. For, Kanishka according to his calculation would be placed not less than eleven hundred years and Mihirakula fully twelve hundred years before their time.

From all this it appears that with regard to early history of Kashmir as narrated by Kalhana, the chronology is not only defective but misleading. Several well-known scholars have devoted their attention to a study of Kalhana's chronology of the *Rajatarangini* particularly in the light of recent archaeological and numismatic discoveries, but so far nothing helpful has come out.<sup>1</sup> We may, therefore, assume the conclusions arrived at by Dr Stein in this respect and accept Ashoka—described in the *Rajatarangini* as being the follower of Buddha's religion who built *stupas* and *viharas*, a fact corroborated by the statement of Heun Tsiang in the seventh century A.D.—as the great Ashoka of Indian history.

#### ACHAEMENIAN AND GREEK INVASIONS

The *Rajatarangini* gives no detailed and authentic information about conditions prevailing in Kashmir and the adjoining regions of north-western India during the Pre-Ashokan period. But some fragmentary records in Sanskrit of the later Vedic period and notices with regard to Achaemenian and Greek invasions of India show that Kashmir formed a part of Gandhara, the eastern region of Afghanistan.

In the later Vedic period the *Brahmanas* and the *Upanishads* mention Gandhara extending on both sides of the Indus with Taxila (Rawalpindi district) and Pushkaravati (modern Charsada, Peshawar) as its principal towns, and in the oldest Buddhist writings it is mentioned that there were sixteen great powers (*solasa mahajanapadas*), which must have existed in the seventh or the early sixth century B.C. The fifteenth on the list is Gandhara, i.e., eastern Afghanistan, with its

<sup>1</sup> Venkatachalam, Pandit Kota, *Chronology of Kashmir History Reconstructed*,

capital at Pushkaravati and also including Kashmir (*Kashmira-Gandhara*).<sup>1</sup>

The north-western part of India seems to have been divided in the latter half of the sixth century B.C. into a number of petty principalities, and there was no great power to curb their mutual strifes and jealousies. Naturally it provided a strong tempting ground to the imperialism of the Achaemenian monarchy which had risen in Persia about this time under the leadership of Cyrus (c. 558-30 B.C.). From the accounts of the Greek historians, the Perisan king Cyrus appears to have subjugated the Indian tribes of the Paropanisus and the Kabul Valley, especially the Gandharians.<sup>2</sup> In the Behustan inscription of Darius, Gadara, *i.e.*, Gandhara is mentioned as one of the provinces of his empire. His immediate successors were too busy with affairs in the west to think of the east, but Darius I (522-486 B.C.) appears to have annexed a portion of the Indus region some time after 518 B.C.

We learn from Herodotus how Darius I sent an expedition some time in 517 B.C. under Skylax of Koryanda to explore the possibility of a passage to the sea from the mouths of the Indus to Persia and in that connection mentions Kaspapyros as a city of the Gandharians. It is therefore not unlikely that Kashmir came for some time under the sway of the Achaemenids.

It is significant for the isolated position which its mountain barriers assured to Kashmir that we do not find any direct mention of the kingdom in the records of Alexander's invasion. The march from Taxila to Jhelum took the Macedonian forces along a line of route which lay comparatively near to the confines of Kashmir. Yet there is no notice in the accounts of Alexander's invasion which can be assumed to imply even a hearsay knowledge of the Kashmir Valley. All we can glean from a reference here and there is that the Valley seems to have been then under the rule of the chief of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera districts).

About the beginning of the spring of 326 B.C. Alexander crossed the Indus somewhere near Ohind (modern Und, near Attock). He was welcomed [at Taxila by Omphis or Ambhi, with rich and attractive presents. Gratified at these gifts Alexander returned them, adding his own, and this won not only the loyalty of the ruler of Taxila but also a contingent of 5,000 soldiers from him. Abhisares, the astute king of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera), who probably held Kashmir Valley as well, surrendered to Alexander of his own accord, thinking that

1 Tripathi, R.S., *History of Ancient India*, pp. 47, 82, 84.

2 Herodotus, I, 152 and 177.



resistance would be of no avail.<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the campaign Alexander made proper arrangements for keeping the conquered parts of the Punjab under his subjection. He placed his new ally, Porus, in charge of all the tract between the Beas and the Jhelum and over fifteen republican nations with more than 5,000 cities; and Ambhi of Taxila was given full jurisdiction over the territories west of the Jhelum. Likewise, the ruler of Abhisaras had his authority extended over Kashmir with the state of Arsaces (Urusa-Hazara district) added to his kingdom.<sup>2</sup> And as a counterpoise to the rule of these Indian princes, Alexander stationed adequate Greek garrisons in cities founded by himself on Indian soil.

With the departure of Alexander, a new power was rising in India. Slowly and patiently Chandragupta Maurya was extending his kingdom of Magadha. Northern India was in a state of ferment about the beginning of the last quarter of the fourth century B.C. In the Punjab, particularly, the people, divided as they were, smarted under the blows of Alexander's viceroys and Chandragupta did not find it difficult to organise the tribes which had not reconciled themselves to the Greek yoke.

As a result of his treaty with Seleukos, and on the latter's withdrawal to the west, Chandragupta got all the satrapies of north-western India, including Gandhara, where at the time of Alexander's invasion he had been residing as a student at the university town of Taxila.<sup>3</sup>

During his successor, Bindusara's reign there was a revolt in Taxila and when Susima, his eldest son and viceroy, could not quell the disturbance, Bindusara transferred Ashoka from Ujjain, and the latter succeeded in restoring order there.

So it was early in his life that Ashoka came in contact with Kashmir. Kalhana's brief reference to his building activities in the Valley, however, indicate that his stay was quite prolonged and it may safely be inferred that he paid regular periodic visits to the beautiful Vale.

Kalhana credits him with the foundation of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, with "ninety-six thousand dwelling houses resplendent with prosperity." He also built numerous *viharas* and *stupas*, particularly

1 Diodorus would, however, have us believe that Embisaros (Abhisares) had made an alliance with Porus and was preparing to oppose Alexander (XVII, 87, M' Crindle *Ibid*, p. 247).

2 M' Crindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, pp. 69 and 111-12

3 Pandit, R.S., *River of Kings*, p. 470.

in the vicinity of Sukseletra<sup>1</sup> and Vitastatra.<sup>2</sup> In the Dharmaranya Vihara at the latter place, he built a Caitya so high "that the eye could not see the extent of its height."<sup>3</sup> He built a massive stone wall round the famous Vijyeshwara temple after dismantling the old stucco enclosure and within it built two temples dedicated to Siva under the name of Ashokeshwara.<sup>4</sup> He is credited with having propitiated by a fast Lord Bhuteshwara<sup>5</sup> at the famous shrine. This is fully in keeping with what from other evidence we conclude, as to Ashoka's attitude towards other great religious systems, that the figures in Kashmir record also as the benefactor of the ancient and famous shrine of Vijayeshwara, and a worshipper at the Siva shrine at Bhutesha.

By far the most important event connected with Ashoka's reign was the introduction of Buddhism in Kashmir. At the conclusion of the deliberations of the Buddhist Council held at Patliputra under the presidentship of Moggaliputta Tissa, Majjhantika was sent to Kashmir and Gandhara at the head of an evangelical mission. Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong mention the arrival of 5,000 monks who were settled in Kashmir by Ashoka and his gift of the Valley to the Sangha for turning it into a centre of study and propagation of Buddhist religious texts.

Ashoka died about 232 B.C. after a reign of forty years. When the sceptre dropped from his hands, the fortunes of the Mauryan dynasty began to suffer decline. Traditions regarding his successors are discrepant. Of his sons, Tivara alone is named in the edicts, and perhaps he predeceased his father as he is not heard of subsequently.

Kalhana says that Ashoka worshipped the God Siva Bhutesha at the famous shrine of Harmukutaganga in Kashmir and "obtained from the God, whom he had pleased by his austerities, a son."

This son, JALAUKA, appears to have become independent in Kashmir after his father's death. Saint Avadhuta, "the vanquisher of Bauddha controversialists," was his religious preceptor.

- 1 Sukseletra (modern Hukaletar, 74° 42' long. 34° lat.) seems to have been a favourite place for Buddhist constructions, for Kalhana later mentions Kani-shka also to have built *stupas* and *vihas* in the locality.
- 2 Vitastatra (modern Vethavotur, 75° 16' long. 30° 33' lat.) is the traditional source of the Vitasta at Verinag and is an ancient place of pilgrimage.
- 3 Ashoka's Srinagar was built at Pandrenthan (ancient Puranadhisthana—old capital), four miles to the south of present Srinagar.
- 4 The famous old shrine of Siva Vijayeshwara has given its name to the town of Vijyabror (modern Bijbihara). The two temples built by Ashoka were known in the time of Kalhana (12th century A.D.)
- 5 The worship of Siva Bhutesha localised near the sacred sites of Mount Harmuka-ta has played an important part in the ancient religion of Kashmir,

Jalauka was a popular hero and an ardent devotee of Siva and used to worship daily at Bhutesha and Vijayeshwara shrines. To cover the distance which is fully four days' journey by foot, he had arranged a relay of ponies all along the route. At first an opponent of Buddhists, he became friendly to them finally. Kalhana records a local tradition of unmistakable Buddhist colouring to show how the king modified his attitude to the Buddhists through divine intercession.

Kalhana tells us that during the latter part of Ashoka's reign the country was harassed by the incursions of the Malechhas (foreigners)<sup>1</sup> and Jalauka is described as a great warrior who cleared the land of these oppressors and made extensive conquests. He is said to have overrun Kanauj and Gandhara and brought from these places men of letters whom he settled in Kashmir.

Incidentally, Kalhana gives a clue to the administrative system in Kashmir at that time.

"Up to that time there existed in this land, which had not yet reached its proper development in legal administration, wealth and other respects, a government [like in most countries. There were only seven main state officials ; the judge, the revenue superintendent, the treasurer, the commander of the army, the envoy, the Purohita, and the astrologer. By establishing eighteen offices (Karmasthana) in accordance with traditional usage, the king created from that time onwards a condition of things as under Yudhisthira."<sup>2</sup>

Jalauka is the hero of many traditions recorded by Kalhana. Once, runs the legend, the king heard of the sanctity of the Sodara spring (Naran Nag) from the Nandipurana, and thenceforth used to worship at that spring. He wished that it might be near the shrine of Jyeshtharudra which he was building at Srinagar. Being engrossed with some work he forgot one day his daily observance and could not take his bath from the Naran Nag spring, when lo! to his great surprise he found a spring breaking forth in a waterless spot at Srinagar "which was alike to Sodara in colour, taste and other respects."

This king founded several villages, amongst which was Varabala, which is now known by the name of Barawal and situated on the right bank of the river Kankanai about a mile above its confluence with the Sindh river. He offered to the Jyeshtharudra temple one hundred ladies

1 Perhaps Malechhas refer to Bactrian Greeks.

2 For explanation of "eighteen traditional Departments of State" see Pandit, *River of Kings*, p. 19.



of his seraglio who used to dance daily before the idol.<sup>1</sup> His wife, Ishanadevi, built temples on the approaches to the Valley. The king together with his queen retired after a reign of 60 years to Siramochana and there passed away.

DAMODARA, who was a descendant of Ashoka, "or belonged to some other family", succeeded to the throne. He was a supporter of Saivism. He founded a city on a plateau in Yachh Pargana which is thenceforth called Damodar Udar after his name. In order to raise water to this town, he constructed a long dam called Gudda Suth. "When", deplores Kalhana, "a high-minded man wishes to execute some beneficial work of an extraordinary character, there arise, alas ! obstacles, owing to the deficiency of men's spiritual merits from former births." One day he was going to the river Jhelum to have his bath after a *shraddha* ceremony, when some Brahmans asked him for food before taking his bath. The king replied : "I cannot feed you before bathing. Go away (*sarpata*) sharp." Thereupon the Brahmans cursed him : "May you be transformed into a serpent (*sarpa*)."<sup>2</sup> Damodara was dismayed and begged their mercy. The curse could not be taken back. "But when you will hear the whole Ramayana recited in a single day the effect of our curse will cease." Damodara became a snake and it is believed that even to the present day he is roaming in that form amidst the dark solitudes of the plateau.

Damodar Udar is now the site of the Srinagar airfield.

The legend about King Damodara being transformed into a snake is still current among the local inhabitants. Satras Teng, a waste spot high up on the *karewa* is named as the site of Damodara's palace and a spring at the adjoining hamlet of Lalgam as the place where the king performed his ablutions.<sup>2</sup>

#### INDO-GREEK OCCUPATION

After the fall of the Mauryan Empire, north-western India was subjected to several foreign invasions and it is significant that there is a gap of at least 200 years in the *Rajatarangini* between the death of Damodra II and the advent of the Kushan rule.

We have noted how Jalauka waged a ruthless war against Malechhas, who were probably Indo-Greek hordes trying to establish their kingdom in territories bordering on Kashmir. Tarn<sup>3</sup> suggests that for

1 Below mount Haramukuta. Perhaps a reference to Wangat the spot where later a group of temples was built.

2 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, p. 29.

3 Tarn, *Greeks in Bactria and India*, p. 155.

a few years Demetrius was the lord of a realm which included southern Kashmir. A fragment in Ptolemy (VII, 42) gives the name of two provinces in Menander's home kingdom east of the Jhelum of which Kaspeira, the upper valleys of the Jhelum, Chenab and Ravi would correspond to southern Kashmir.

We have it on the authority of *Milindapanha* that the discussion between Nagasena, the Buddhist saint and Milinda or Menander, the Indo-Greek ruler of north-western India, was held at a place only 12 *yojanas* from Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

Cunningham records a large find of silver coins of Azes and Azilises on the bank of the Jhelum river, in the hills between Baramula and Jhelum.<sup>2</sup> All this points to a definite rule, though temporary, of the Indo-Greeks over Kashmir.<sup>3</sup>

This contact with the Greeks is responsible for the beautiful architectural and sculptural style of the old Kashmir temples, which have won admiration from visitors to the Valley. The coinage of the later kings has also been influenced by this contact. But the most important of all is the development of Gandhara or the Graeco-Buddhist art, depicting scenes from the life of the Buddha. The aquiline nose, the large lotus eye and the folded drapery found in the terra-cotta and stone images unearthed at Ushkur near Baramula and some other places, indicate the deep Grecian influence on the Kashmirian artists following this contact.

The last Greek ruler of the frontier regions and the Kabul valley was Hermaeus, who flourished about the middle of the first century B.C.<sup>4</sup> Hemmed in by enemies on all sides, he succumbed to the pressure of the advancing Kushans under Kujala Kadphises. The Greek power had been internally weakened and could not withstand the inroads of these 'barbarian hordes.'

The facts regarding the origin and movement of the great Kushan race whose sway extended from the farthest corners of Central Asia

1 *Milindapanha*, Ed. Trenckner, pp. 82, 83

2 *Coins of the Indo-Scythians*, p. 44

3 A reference to the Sediman legend current in Kashmir may be made here. According to Hasan who bases his authority on the history of Mulla Ahmad, Domodara II was succeeded by his son Narendra, in whose time a saint from "abroad called Sediman arrived in an aerial car" and the king held religious discourses with him, the two spending many days and nights together. Ultimately the king preferred the company of the saint to the throne and left along with him, leaving the kingdom to be ruled by the Turushka princes Hushka, Jushka and Kanishka.

Could Sediman be actually Menander or any other Indo-Greek king?

4 Tarn, *Ibid.*, pp. 331, 337.

to the borders of Bengal may be briefly mentioned here.<sup>1</sup>

In the second century B.C. a movement of population started in the vast Central Asian region which profoundly affected the histories of Central Asia and India for a number of centuries to come. The Graeco-Bactrian dominion was overwhelmed entirely about 162 B.C. by the Yu-echi, who had been driven westwards from their settlements on the borders of China by the Hiung-nu, the Huns of Degnignes. According to the oldest Chinese history the Yu-echi, a nomad people, lived in the vicinity of present day Kansu province and about 177 B.C. were subjugated like all their neighbours by the Tukharian Hiung-nu. Between 167-161 B.C. they renewed the struggle without success. Lao-Shang the Khan of Hiung-nu slew their king Chang-lun, and made a drinking cup of his skull, and the great mass of the vanquished people (the Great Yu-echi) left their homes and moved westward reaching and subduing the kingdom of Ki-pin (Kabul Valley). In 138 B.C. the king of China sent a certain Chang Ch'ien to urge them to return and help him to clear the caravan route by thrusting back the Hiung-nu. But the Yu-echi were too happily settled in a rich and peaceful land to listen to his representations and he returned to China reaching there in 126 B.C.

In about A.D. 15, Kadphises I, a chieftain of the Kushan clan of Yu-echi welded together all the sections of the Yu-echi nation and conquered Afghanistan. He was succeeded by his son Kadphises II probably in 45 A.D. who conquered north-western India as far as Banaras. Kanishka succeeded him in 78 A.D. and extended his empire to the borders of Bengal.<sup>2</sup>

#### KANISHKA AND HIS SUCCESSORS

With the names of the three Kushan kings, HUSHKA, JUSHKA, KANISHKA, we reach once more the terra firma of historical record. The identity of Kanishka with the great Kushan or Indo-Scythian ruler of north-western India, so well known to us from Buddhist traditions, the coins and inscriptions, was recognised long ago. The name of Hushka, frequent enough in the form of Huvishka on the coins and inscriptions, has been borne out by epigraphical evidence. Jushka alone remains to be searched for. Kalhana's account of the reign of these kings, who are supposed to have ruled simultaneously, is brief enough, but is undoubtedly based on genuine historical tradition. It clearly

- 1 For notice of the historical data relating to these early Indo-Scythian rulers compare Von Gutschmid in *Encycl. Brit.* xviii, p. 606 : Drouin *Le Rois Indo-Scythe*, p. 46.
- 2 Three interesting gold coins of the Kushans similar to Kushan coins of Kashmir were discovered in the Rajshahi Division, Bengal. (JASB, Vol. XXVIII, p. 130).



describes them as princes of Turushka nationality, as powerful sovereigns and as faithful patrons of the Buddhist Church. On these points the statements of the Chronicle are fully supported by the most authentic records. The continued existence of the three places, Kanishkapur, Hushkapur and Jushkapur, which are described as foundations of these kings and which survive to this day, is likely to have assisted in preserving the recollection of their founders.

That Kashmir was included in the wide dominions of the great Kushan dynasty is a fact amply attested by the combined evidence of Buddhist records and the coins, copper pieces of Kanishka and Huvishka being found in profusion at many of the old sites in Kashmir.

According to Buddhist tradition, Kanishka held the third Buddhist Council in Kashmir and Heun Tsiang on his visit to the Valley found still the memory of that ruler fully alive in the kingdom. The popularity and power enjoyed by Buddhism in Kashmir, under the sway of the Turushka kings, as observed by Kalhana, is historically correct. A detailed account of expansion of Buddhism and of Kanishka's Third Buddhist Council is given in Chapter Four.

It is probable that Vasishka and HUVISHKA who were the sons of Kanishka acted as Viceroys in succession but it appears that Vasishka predeceased his father who was succeeded by Huvishka in 140 A.D.

Huvishka was succeeded by VASUDEVA, also called JUSHKA. He died about A.D. 178 when the Kushan rule came to an end in Kashmir. The dynasty, however, continued to rule in Kabul and the Punjab till they were swept away by Hun invasions in the 5th century A.D.

Buddhism it seems suffered a reverse in Kashmir after the reign of Kanishka and his immediate successors. The progress of its decline is significantly brought out by Kalhana who mentions that the Buddhists who gained a great preponderance under the benevolent care of Nagarjuna were responsible for the destruction of the traditional customs and rites of the land. This evoked the wrath of the Nagas, the tutelary deities of the Valley, who revenged themselves by causing excessive snowfall which destroyed the "Bauddhas" and obliged the king to leave the Valley during the cold season for the lower hill tracts south of Kashmir.

Finally, according to Kalhana, a pious Brahman, through the help of Nila Naga, the lord of Kashmir Nagas, restored the traditional cult through rites and rituals as prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana* and thereby freed the land from excessive snowfall and "the plague of the Bhikshus."

A repetition of this legend during the reign of ABHIMANYU I, who succeeded Vasudeva *alias* Jushka, is interesting as showing a distinctly:

anti-Buddhist drive in progress during his reign. Says Kalhana :

“At the time there manifested itself some miraculous power through which the Brahmans, who offered oblations and sacrifices, escaped destruction, while the Bauddhas perished.”<sup>1</sup>

The traditional Brahmanic learning was also revived in the reign of this king, for Kalhana definitely mentions that under his instructions one Candracarya and others “brought the *Mahabhasya*, which was at that time difficult of access (for study), into general use.” Similarly the king is credited with having founded a town named Abhimanyapur (modern Bemyun near Srinagar) in which he set up a temple dedicated to the worship of Siva.

This drive against Buddhism was continued during the reign of his successor GONANDA III, who finally assured the restoration of the traditional worship of the earlier cult. Gonanda III, who ruled for thirty-five years, was the founder of a dynasty bearing his name. His four successors, VIBHISHNA I, INDRAJIT, RAVANA, and VIBHISHNA II, are briefly mentioned as founders of a few towns and dedicators of temples.

#### NAGA TRIBE

The account given of NARA or KIMNARA, the next ruler, seems more substantial. In reality, however, it consists only of an elaborated legend relating to an ancient town near Vijayeshwara which local traditions surviving partly to the present day, attributed to king Nara, and which was believed to have been destroyed in a great catastrophe brought about through the king's wickedness. Kalhana's mention of ruins and the actual finds of ancient coins in the locality are indications that there once stood an old town on the banks of the Vitasta below the plateau of Cakradhara, near the modern town of Bijbihara.

According to this legend King Nara, who was in the beginning of his reign a good and just king, developed towards the end Nero-like propensities. He founded a beautiful town which “was a synonym for paradise.” In one of the cool ponds in the main park of the city dwelt Naga Susravas and his two beautiful daughters.

It happened that one day a poor Brahman, Vaisakha by name came to take rest in a grove near this pond. While he was about to have some refreshments, two beautiful girls came up from the spring and apparently taking no heed of him, began to hungrily eat pods of *kachidani* grass which grew in abundance there.

This amazed the Brahman, who taking up courage inquired of them the reason for their poverty. The girls related him their sad story.

<sup>1</sup> *Rajatarangini*, i—181.

They were the daughters of Naga Susravas and even though they were entitled to a share of the rich crops growing around Kimnarapura, they could not touch it until the field-guard partook of the new harvest. But as ill luck would have it, he had taken a vow not to eat a single grain of fresh crops; hence their miserable condition.

The Brahman boy was moved to pity. One day he stealthily put some fresh corn into the vessel in which the field-guard was cooking his food. No sooner did he partake of it than the Naga carried off, through thunder and storm, the rich harvest all around the city. The Naga was naturally grateful to the Brahman and granted him his request to marry one of his daughters.

While the happy couple were leading a peaceful life in the city, King Nara heard of the beauty of the Brahman's wife and tried to seduce her through his emissaries. Having failed in these attempts he decided to carry her off by force. Vaisakha and his wife thereupon ran for their lives and jumped into the pond inhabited by Naga Susravas.

The Naga was infuriated. He cast thunder clouds in the sky. There was a heavy downpour and the beautiful city of Kimnarapura was destroyed together with its people. The Naga and his daughter and son-in-law then left the ruined city and created for their residence a lake of "dazzling whiteness resembling a sea of milk", which to this day is known as Sheshnag.

Legends like these and worship of Nagas (snakes) and springs associated with Nagas among several tribes and communities have aroused the interest of several scholars to a closer and more intensive study of their origin and extent. The historical background of Nagas has thus become an object of research. The great importance of the Nagas both in Buddhist and Brahmanical lore is reflected in plastic and pictorial art. Among the frescoes of Ajanta there are several representations of the Nagas.

According to James Fergusson, the Nagas were not originally serpents but serpent worshippers—an aboriginal race of the Turanian stock inhabiting Northern India, who were conquered by the Aryans. Dr C. F. Oldham is of the opinion that the Nagas claimed descent from the Sun and had the hooded serpent for a totem. Takshacila (Taxila), he says, was their chief city.

K. R. Subramanian in his "Origin of Shaivism" mentions that the Naga is mixed with the cult of Saivism, and it is claimed that South Indian Saivism migrated to Northern India, leaving in the South its remnants in the Nagaras, or Nayars. The tribes of Nagas had powerful kingdoms in different parts of India.



We cannot but deduce from the stories of the Nagas, as mentioned at different places in the *Rajatarangini*, that for a very long time there raged a long and bitter struggle between them and the new settlers in Kashmir. Ultimately there seems to have been a preponderance of the Aryan immigrants who, as in other parts of India, absorbed the original inhabitants.

Nara was succeeded by his son *SIDHA* who had escaped the terrible fate of his father as he had been away from the city on its day of destruction. He is described as a very pious prince and credited with a bodily ascent to heaven. Of *UTPALAKSHA*, *HIRANYAKSHA*, *HIRANYAKULA* and *VASUKULA*, the next four kings who are supposed to have ruled in succession from father to son, we are practically told only the names and lengths of their reigns. *Hiranyaksha* appears to have traditionally figured as the founder of *Hiranyapura*, now a small place at the entrance of the Sindh valley.

#### MIHIRAKULA AND LATER HUNS

We reach again a record of truly historical interest in Kalhana's account of *MIHIRAKULA*, the son and successor of *Vasukula*. The identity of *Mihirakula* with the Ephthalite or White Hun ruler of that name must be regarded as certain. From the epigraphical and other evidence it is seen that *Mihirakula* had succeeded, about A. D. 515, to his father *Toramana* as ruler of the wide dominion which earlier White Hun conquests had established between the Kabul Valley and Central India.

The *Hiung-nu* or the *Hunas* of Sanskrit literature first came to view about 165 B. C. when they defeated the *Yu-echi* and compelled them to quit their lands in north-western China. In course of time the *Huns* also moved westwards, one branch proceeding towards the *Oxus Valley* and the other section reaching Europe where they earned undying notoriety for their savage cruelties. From the *Oxus* the *Huns* turned towards the south about the second decade of the fifth century A. D. and crossing Afghanistan and north-western passes, eventually entered India. They attacked the western parts of the Gupta dominions but were hurled back by the military strength of *Skandagupta*. Later the Hun hordes poured into India again after 484 A. D. and under their leader *Toramana* were mainly responsible for the downfall of the Gupta Empire.

*Mihirakula*, according to Kalhana's account and as represented in Indian tradition, was a cruel tyrant, taking fiendish delight in acts of brutality. *Heun Tsiang* mentions this king with his capital at *Sakala* (*Sialkot* in Pakistan) as the persecutor of the peaceful Buddhists and a merciless destroyer and plunderer of their *stupas* and monasteries.

*Mihirakula* was not, however, destined to enjoy his power for

long. He suffered defeat and discomfiture at the hands of two different kings, which not only put an end to his power but also to the Hun menace in the rest of India.<sup>1</sup> The first was Yashodharman of Malwa who routed his forces and broke his power. The second was Baladitya the ruler of Magadha, who defeated and captured Mihirakula. After securing his release through the intercession of the queen mother, Mihirakula sought safety in Kashmir, posing as an ardent supporter of Saivas. The refugee, however, misused the kindness shown to him, and by his machinations soon seized the throne of Kashmir.

Kalhana recounting his earlier exploits mentions his campaign in South India, where he had defeated the king of Ceylon and had subjugated the territories of the chiefs of Tanjore, Karnatac, and Central Gujarat.

Kalhana represents him as a cruel king whose "approach became known by the sight of vultures, crows and the like, eager to feed on those being massacred by his encircling army."<sup>2</sup> Mihirakula had arrived at that stage of human depravity when cruelty becomes pleasing for its own sake. While crossing the Pir Panjal pass, an elephant missed his foot and tumbled down a precipice. Its shrieks and yells while rolling down pleased the ears of this mad king and he ordered one hundred more elephants to be pushed down the precipice, just to amuse himself. The place is since called Hastivanj (Sans. *hasti*—elephant, *vanjana*—destroyer).

Kalhana mentions another tradition about Mihirakula's cruelty. While diverting a canal, a large boulder stood in its way which could not be removed. The king announced that according to a dream which he had had that night, the boulder was the abode of a Yakshani, and it could be moved only by the touch of a chaste woman. All women of high families in the neighbourhood were ordered to touch the boulder which of course could not move. It was then given out that a potter's wife, Candravati, by her mere touch had flung the boulder away to one side. This gave the pitiless king an excuse to order massacre of thousands of helpless women, their husbands, brothers and children. "Felony", declares Kalhana in anger, "is the slaughter of living beings on a large scale, even though for a cause."

According to Kalhana there were some historians who excused his cruelties and referred to a tradition that after killing the people of Aryadesha, Mihirakula performed austere penances and earned merit by re-introducing pious observances in Kashmir which had suffered

1 Majumdar, R. C., *Ancient India*, pp. 254-55.

2 *Rajatarangini*, i—291.

owing to the irruption of impure Dards, Bhauttas and Malechhas. The legend and emblems of Mihirakula's coins display an unmistakable leaning towards the Saiva cult, and thus seem to justify to some extent the above observations.

He is credited with building a shrine of Siva near Srinagar and founding a town in Holada (Vular Pargana), calling it after his own name Mihirapur. He also bestowed one thousand *agraharas* or land grants at Vijayeshwara to lower class Brahmans of Gandhara, the Brahmans of Kashmir refusing to accept them from the hands of a cruel king.

Afflicted with an exacerbating malady, Mihirakula ended his life by committing suicide. He cast himself as a libation on to a huge sacrificial fire which he had lighted himself. A voice is said to have been heard saying that he had attained salvation, since he had shown no mercy even to himself. Whether he got salvation or not, the country at any rate got deliverance from the fiendish acts of this cruel king.

After Mihirakula's death, it is likely that he was followed by other Hun rulers. Though the *Rajatarangini* does not specifically mention it, some of the names recorded in it disclose their Hun identity. Their peculiar names and the fact that most of them were ardent Saivas, show that they continued the patronage of Brahmans and succeeded to a great extent in reducing the power and influence of the Buddhists.

BAKA, the son and successor of Mihirakula, is painted by Kalhana as a virtuous prince and a great contrast to his father. He founded a Siva temple called Bakesa and built a canal. A tradition remembered as late as Kalhana's own time, attributes the death of the king to the witchcraft of a sorceress.

The next four kings, KSITINANDA, VASUNANDA, NARA II, and AKSHA are each disposed of with a single line, and accordingly can claim only a very shadowy existence as historical personages. All the information vouchsafed about them is that Vasunanda composed a treatise on erotics, and Aksha founded the town of Akshvala, the modern Achabal where at the foot of the famous spring lies the beautiful garden laid out by Jahangir.

GOPADITYA, the next king has a greater claim to historical reality. He is credited with the building of the temple named Jyeshtheshwara on the Gopa hill.<sup>1</sup> He donated land to Brahmans from Aryadesha near its

1 The Gopa hill is the hill now called Sankaracarya in Srinagar. The old name survives in the village of Gopkar situated at the foot of the hill. The ancient temple on the hill which stands to this day perhaps dates from this period, and formed part of the original temple of Jyeshtheshwara.



vicinity.<sup>1</sup> He stopped the slaughter of animals "save for sacrifices."

Of GOKARNA, the successor of Gopaditya, Kalhana has nothing to say except that he built a temple of Gokarnesa.

We must, however, recognise KHINKHILA, also called NARENDRA-DITYA, whom Kalhana names Gokarna's son, as the Hun ruler who calls himself DEVA SAHI KHINGILA on his coins. He consecrated shrines to Buteshwara and his spiritual *guru* Ugra, built a temple name Ugresa, as well as a shrine dedicated to *matricakras* or mystic symbols.

After Khinkhila, his son, YUDHISTHIRA I, ascended the throne. He had small eyes and was therefore nicknamed *andha* or blind. In the beginning of his rule he was just and benevolent, but later falling a prey to pernicious influences of wicked companions, gave himself up to a course of base indulgences and debauchery. He despised the learned and his vices and crimes were numerous. As was expected, the people and the soldiery detested him and the vassal chiefs of bordering territories became rebellious. Coming to know that the nobles of the kingdom were about to dethrone him, the king stealthily fled together with his wives across the passes to the Punjab. After some time he tried to regain his throne, but was defeated and captured, and ended his days in a prison at Durgagalika, present Drugjan at the western foot of Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar.

The six kings whose reigns are chronicled in the Second Book of the *Rajatarangini* are of different lines of descent. After Yudhisthira's dethronement, the nobles of Kashmir invited from India a relative of King Vikramaditya and crowned him as King of Kashmir under the name of PRATAPADITYA I. Due to internal dissensions, the kingdom, according to Kalhana, came for some time under the rule of "Harsa and other foreign kings." Pratapaditya is said to have ruled the people as lovingly as any son of the soil would.

Kalhana rejects the opinion of some earlier chroniclers who held this Vikramaditya to be identical with Vikramaditya Sakari, the traditional vanquisher of the Sakas.<sup>2</sup> But he does not supply a clue that might help us to ascertain which of the several Vikramadityas was really meant. As Kalhana in the same connection mentions that Kashmir came under the rule of Harsa, we might infer that the great Harsa Vikramaditya of Ujjain who ruled in the first half of the sixth century A.D., was intended. Yet Kalhana's subsequent account refers to this ruler as the patron of Matrigupta. It is clear that there is some

1 Aryadesha is the land of the Aryas, and refers to the Indo-Gangetic plain. This is an illustration of immigration by royal invitation of Brahmans from other parts of India.

2 *Rajatarangini*, ii-6,

error in Kalhana's chronology. This is perhaps due to confusion caused by earlier Chroniclers who were unable to connect the local rulers with kings who ruled Kashmir from far-off centres in the rest of India through viceroys or governors. We have here a clear indication of Kashmir under the rule of Indian kings such as we must assume it to have been during more than one period preceding the commencement of authentic history in Kalhana's record.

Of Pratapaditya I and his son and successor, JALAUKA, Kalhana has otherwise nothing to say except that they ruled justly and exactly for thirty-two years each. TUNJINA who came next had a saintly wife named Vakpusta. Both the king and the queen founded several temples and towns and were great patrons of learning and fine arts. In his time flourished the great poet Candaka. Dramatic performances were frequently held at the court.

Kalhana gives a graphic account of the terrible famine which took a heavy toll of life in Kashmir during Tunjina's rule. When the fields were full with ripening rice crop, an untimely snowfall in the month of Bhadun (September) completely destroyed it, resulting in a devastating famine when, in the words of the poet-historian, "the love of wife, affection for the son, loving kindness of the parent, tormented by hunger, in the anxiety of a belly-ful, were forgotten by everyone."

Vakpusta founded the town of Katimusa and Ramusa<sup>1</sup> and having no son of her own performed *sati* on the death of her husband. The place where the king and the queen were cremated was till Kalhana's time and even later known as Vakpustatavi. A religious endowment created there by the charitable queen before her death "distributed food to multitudes of indigent people even at the present day"—records the chronicler.

Of the next king VIJAYA, Kalhana contents himself with recording that he belonged to another family, and that the foundation of a town surrounding the ancient shrine of Vijayeshwara was due to him.

His son, JAYENDRA, who ascended the throne after him was without a son and at his death the throne remained vacant for some time.

A fanciful legend spun out in great detail about the miraculous restoration to life of Samdhimat, the pious minister, whom Jayendra had cruelly put to death, is the main theme of the account given of this king. The saintly hero of the tale is then supposed to have ascended the Kashmir throne vacated by Jayendra's death under the title of

<sup>1</sup> Katimusa, modern Kaimuh, is a considerable village on the left bank of the Veshau—tributary of the Jhelum, 75°9' long. 33°43' lat. Ramusa, or the present Romush, is situated on the high road from Srinagar to Shopyan, 74°54' long. 33°42' lat.

Aryaraja. He seems to be considered in the Kashmir traditions as an ideal saintly king who built shrines and whose memory till Kalhana's time was preserved in several religious endowments. SAMDHIMAT-ARYA-RAJA voluntarily abdicated and ended his days as a recluse at the sacred site of Siva Bhutesha.

Aryaraja's abdication which closes the Second Book of the Chronicle, was followed according to Kalhana by a restoration of Gonanda's family to the rule of Kashmir. MEGHAVAHANA, the first prince of the restored dynasty, is said to have been the son of Gopaditya, a great-grandson of Yudhisthira, living in exile at the court of the king of Gandhara.

In his youth Meghavahana had attended the *Svayamvara* of the daughter of the king of Assam and had been chosen by the bride, Amritaprabha, to be her husband. His versatile genius and his calm and dignified personality eminently fitted him to discharge the duties of a king. No wonder that several myths and stories grew round his name, some of which have been reproduced by Kalhana.

There is, however, no doubt to his being influenced in his early youth by Buddhism, Gandhara being still a Buddhist stronghold. This explains his zeal in prohibiting the slaughter of animals not only in his own realm but all over India. The stories about his military expeditions to as far off places as South India and Ceylon, in order to enforce his decree, and other miraculous stories of his saving animals and human beings from sacrifice at religious places by ignorant and fanatical worshippers, only illustrate his staunch belief in the doctrine of *ahimsa* as preached by the Buddha. That popular belief in Kashmir gave them full credence is shown by the fact that certain royal banners, used still in Kalhana's time, were supposed to have been presented to Meghavahana during his expeditions by the king of Ceylon.

Meghavahana founded the town of Meghavana and also the *vihara* or monastery of Meghanatha. His queen Amritaprabha built a monastery named Amriatbhavan<sup>1</sup> for the accommodation of foreign Bhikshus. This *vihara* was known to Ou-kong. Her father's *guru* who had come from Loh (Leh ?), and who was designated as *stonpa*, constructed a *stupa* which came to be known as Lostunpa. Several more *stupas* and *viharas* were founded by his other queens Yukadevi, Indra-devi, Khadana and Samma. All these endowments seem to rest on genuine tradition.

Meghavahana's son and successor, SRESTHASENA who is said to have borne also the names of Pravarasena, and Tunjana, built various

1 Vantabhawan, five miles from Srinagar on the Grandarbal road.



sacred structures at Puranadisthana, the city founded originally by Ashoka the site of which is now marked by Pandrenthan.

Sresthasena had two sons, of whom the elder, HIRANYA, succeeded him, while the other, Toramana, acted as Yuvaraj.

After some time, Toramana showed signs of disobedience to his brother and struck coins in his own name. Thereupon Hiranya got offended and threw Toramana into prison. The latter's wife, Anjana, took refuge in a potter's house. She was enceinte and gave birth to a son whom she named Pravarasena, after the name of his grandfather. The potter's wife nourished him as her own child. He grew up a fine lad and the people believed him to be the potter's son.

But even in his young age he displayed signs of greatness. He used to play at king and the court and was assiduously learning to shoot at the butts. Anjana's brother, Jayendra, while in search of his sister arrived at the place where Pravarasena was playing and was struck by princely presence of the lad and by the manner in which he was playing at conducting government. He was also attracted irresistibly by his love for the boy, suspecting him, from his resemblance to his brother-in-law, to be his own nephew, and followed him in the evening to his house. Here he found his sister who related to him her misfortune. The boy on hearing the sad story of his mother and of his father being in prison, determined to grow into a strong and proficient soldier to avenge his father's incarceration.

Hiranya, at the intercession of some courtiers, released his brother, Toramana who died shortly afterwards.

Hiranya had no son and at his death the throne fell vacant. The courtiers approached King Vikramaditya Harsa of Ujjain, to take Kashmir under his protection and depute someone to conduct its administration. Some time previous to this a Brahman of Kashmir, named MATRIGUPTA who was a learned and pious man, had gone to Ujjain to win favour and recognition at Vikramaditya's court. He had been there for six months sitting at the palace gate. One cold winter night Vikramaditya on waking up found the palace in darkness, the lamps having gone out by the blast of the wind. He called his attendants but they were fast asleep and gave no reply. Matrigupta who was sitting up outside in the palace compound heard the king's voice and he ran in and lighted up the lamps.

A conversation is said to have taken place between Matrigupta and the king who was struck by the superior learning of the poet and was at the same time touched by his poverty. It then occurred to him to grant this poor but able man the governorship of Kashmir and so he

wrote to the nobles there that Matrigupta had been appointed to the high office. The following morning he summoned Matrigupta to his presence, gave him the royal warrant in an envelope, and told him to carry it to the nobles of Kashmir who would give him a fitting reward. The Brahman, rather disappointed, being unacquainted with the contents of the envelope, returned to Kashmir. When he reached Shurapura, the first stage in the Kashmir kingdom, he made over the envelope to the courtiers who had gone there to receive him and out went a fanfare of trumpets proclaiming Matrigupta as the governor of Kashmir.

Romantic as this story appears, which Kalhana treats as a text for many a moralising reflection, it yet furnishes us with an important historical clue in the mention of Matrigupta's royal patron. Vikramaditya-Harsa of Ujjain is subsequently mentioned by Kalhana as the father of Siladitya-Pratapasila, and the latter is undoubtedly the same King Siladitya whom Heun Tsiang knew to have ruled Malwa about 580 A. D. This indication leads us to identify Kalhana's Vikramaditya-Harsa with the famous Vikramaditya whose rule must be placed in the first half of the sixth century. It appears probable that Vikramaditya had assisted in or at least profited by the overthrow of the Ephthalite dominion. It is therefore possible also that he exercised that direct influence on the affairs of Kashmir which Kalhana's narrative regarding Matrigupta seems to indicate.

That Matrigupta's brief rule in Kashmir is a historical fact is proved by a poem *Hayagrivavadha* written by the poet Mentha under his patronage. We have also genuine traditions regarding Matrigupta in the references made by Kalhana to the temple of Matriguptaswamin built by him.

It was Dr Baudaji who first suggested that Matrigupta should be identified with Kalidasa, the great Sanskrit poet and dramatist. He based his theory on the assumption that "Kalidasa although a resident of Ujjain which he notices in his works with evident predilection, was in all likelihood a native of Kashmir. He draws his illustrations chiefly from the natural history and physical geography of northern India, especially the Himalayas."<sup>1</sup>

These observations of Dr Baudaji later on led Dr L. D. Kalla to conduct extensive research on Kalidasa's birth-place, which he puts in Kashmir.

Matrigupta proved a successful ruler, was just and liberal-minded, pious and tender-hearted. He also prohibited the slaughter of animals.

<sup>1</sup> For Dr Baudaji's theory of Kashmir as the probable home of Kalidasa, see his *The Literary Remains*, pp. 49-41.

He built at the shrine of Madhusudana a temple called Matrigupta-swamin, and donated the revenue of several villages for its maintenance. His rule, however, did not last for long, as at the death of his patron he turned a recluse and repaired to Banaras to pass his remaining days there.

PRAVARASENA II learnt of Vikramaditya's death and of Matrigupta's abdication, in Kangra, where he was organising an army to march on Kashmir to recover the throne of his forefathers.

Heun Tsiang distinctly tells us that Siladitya was on the throne of Malwa sixty years before his own time, *i.e.*, about 580 A. D. which brings us to the second half of the sixth century as the approximate date of Pravarasena.

The date is indirectly confirmed by a mention of Srinagar, founded by Pravarasena and known then as Pravrapura, in the Annals of the T'ang dynasty which record that in the early part of the eighth century A. D. Pravrapura was the official designation of the city. Heun Tsiang does not mention it by name but calls it the 'new city', in contradistinction to Purandisthana, the old city of Ashoka, which shows that it was then recently built.

Equally convincing evidence on Pravarasena's date is supplied by the coins bearing his name, of which we possess rare specimens both in gold and silver. These are unmistakably older than the coins of the Karkota dynasty whose rule began early in the seventh century A. D.

Coins of Toramana, the brother of Hiranya and of Parvarasena disclose an affinity with those of the Kushan and Ephtalite kings and it seems that the kings of Kashmir till the end of the seventh century came from a branch of, if not direct from, the Little Kushans.

Pravarasena was a brave, virtuous king and ruled the country well. He proved his martial qualities by marching with a large army to the extreme south of India. Vikramaditya's son Pratapasila, was being troubled by his enemies, but Pravarasena subdued them. The throne, *Singhasan*, which originally belonged to the ancestors of Meghavahana and afterwards had come into the possession of Vikramaditya was recovered by Pravarasena from Pratapasila. He thus shook off the suzerainty of Ujjain. Pravarasena also led an expedition to Saurashtra and defeated its ruler. He repeatedly defeated Mummuni, the chief of a clan in Central Asia.

It is also said of Pravarasena's magnanimity that the territories he conquered he gave back to their own rulers and deprived none of his inheritance.



He made his name immortal by founding the city of Pravarasenagar, now called Srinagar (the capital of Kashmir). Pravarasena died after reigning for 60 years. It is said that he bodily ascended to heaven while worshipping in his temple, Pravaresha.<sup>1</sup>

YUDHISTHIRA II, his son from his queen Ratnaprabha, now ascended the throne. His ministers, named Sarvaratana, Jaya and Skandagupta, erected *viharas* and *caityas*.<sup>2</sup> Another minister of his was Vajrendra, who built *caityas* and other shrines at the village of Bhavachheda.<sup>3</sup> Kumarasena, his chief minister was a distinguished statesman.

Of NARENDRADITYA, also called Lakhana, the son of Yudhisthira II from his queen Padmavati, we only know that he established a system of keeping records and built the temple of Narendrasvamin. The addition of Lakhana as his second name shows again the close relationship of the kings to the Little Kushans.

Lakhana-Narendraditya's rule is according to Kalhana, followed by the fantastically long reign of RANADITYA. He is said to have ruled for three hundred years. Hasan, however, on the authority of *Ratnakarpurana* says that actually six rulers were on the throne of Kashmir during this period, namely TUNJINA, SARABSENA, GANDHARLENA, LACHMANA, SURAKA, and VAJRADITYA. But Hasan has nothing more to mention about their reigns than some mythical and fanciful stories.

About Ranaditya also Kalhana has only to record some historical traditions in the few references to shrines and other sacred objects which are attributed to him. The exploits of the King in the nether world and the wooing of his wife Ranarambha in an earlier life are some of the fanciful stories related by him.

The hero of so many marvellous tales is said to have been followed to the throne of Kashmir by his son VIKRAMADITYA. Of his long reign of forty-one years nothing is related but the foundation of some sacred buildings no longer traceable.

BALADITYA, Vikramaditya's younger brother, succeeded him. His three younger brothers, Khankha, Shatrugan and Malava were his three ministers and they built a *vihara*, a temple and an embankment respectively. His queen Bimba built the shrine of Siva Bimbeshwara at Aristotsadana.

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- 1 Identified at the south-west of Hariparbat where at present stands the Ziarat of Baha-ud-din Sahib.
  - 2 Skandabhavan *vihara* stood in the locality named Khandabavan near the Seventh Bridge in Srinagar,
  - 3 Buchh is a village in the Vular Pargana.

He had a beautiful daughter, named Anangalekha. An astrologer foretold that with his death would end his dynasty, his son-in-law wearing his crown after him. The king did not like the idea of his being succeeded by the descendants of his daughter and tried to defeat Fate. He thought that a menial could never become a king and, therefore, married his daughter to the keeper of his horses, named Durlabhavardhana. Durlabhavardhana was, however, a born prince, being a son of Naga-Karkota, which fact the king did not know. He was shrewd and clever. His qualities enabled him to attain distinction and the king bestowed on him the title of Prajnaditya and also much wealth. But Anangalekha, evidently thinking him a low class man, did not like him as her husband and, therefore, did not remain faithful to him.

She had infamous connection with the Minister Khankha. One day Durlabhavardhana saw his own wife and Khankha together in her inner palace and he naturally became enraged and wanted to kill them both there and then. But he soon reflected and regained his self-control, thinking that if he killed them, the matter would become known to the public and his own honour would be lost. He wrote down upon the sleeping minister's garment that he had intended to kill him for his vile and detestable deed but had deliberately let him off. Having written this Durlabhavardhana went away. When Khankha woke up and read the words on his clothes, he repented and desisted from such deeds in future. He never forgot the noble-mindedness of Durlabhavardhana and his forgiving nature and was anxious to repay his kindness. He did it by helping him to ascend the throne of his father-in-law with whose death we come to the end of the Gonanda line of the kings of Kashmir and the Third Book of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### THE RISE OF NORTHERN BUDDHISM

“THE SPREAD of Buddhism to Kashmir, is an event of extraordinary importance in the history of that religion. Thenceforward that country became a mistress in the Buddhist Doctrine and the headquarters of a particular school—the Mahayana and the Sarvastivadin. The influence of Kashmir was very marked, especially in the spread of Buddhism beyond India. From Kashmir it penetrated to Qandhar and Kabul and thence over Bactria. Tibetan Buddhism had also its essential origin from Kashmir, so great is the importance of this region in the history of this religion.”<sup>1</sup>

The introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir is attributed to a monk called Majjhantika, a disciple of Ananda the constant companion and servitor of the Great Teacher, Gautama Buddha. The Buddhist legend regarding his journey to Kashmir and his victory over the Naga King is a recension of the *Nilamatpurana* legend. A similar tradition appears in *Mulasarvastivada Vinaya Pitaka* of Kashmir. In this text, Buddha is said to have forecast to Vajrapani that Madhandina, a disciple of Ananda, would propagate his religion in Kashmir, the land of blue forests. He would subdue the malevolent Huluta Naga, and extend the seat on which he would sit cross-legged to miraculously cover the whole of Kashmir, thereby ousting the Nagas from their habitation, and making the vast country of 60,000 villages an abode for meditating monks.

Similar traditions preserved in Buddhist texts testify to the prevalence of Buddhism in Kashmir from the third century B.C. to the 12th century A.D.

Historically speaking, Ashoka had a hand in the introduction of Buddhism to Kashmir, but his son Jalauka was anti-Buddhist and destroyer of monasteries. He is said to have revived the Naga and Saiva cults. After this set-back for some time, Buddhism was re-established by the Indo-Scythian rulers, particularly Kanishka. Hushka and Jushka also built several *caityas* and *mathas* at Suksaletra and other places.

Buddhism again suffered a reverse after the rule of the Kushan rulers and, later in the fifth century A.D., it was nearly wiped off the Valley by the Hun ruler Mihirakula. Baka, Mihirakula's son, however,

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1 Vassilyev, *Der Buddhism*, I-44.



seems to have atoned for his predecessor's sins by restoring the *caityas* and *mathas*. Similarly under Meghavahana Buddhism again flourished and he and his wife built several *viharas* and *caityas* and prohibited the slaughter of animals.

Subsequent rulers, it appears, were not all supporters of Buddhism and with the rise of the Saiva cult and philosophy, Buddhism though lingering on for some time, was finally replaced by the traditional Brahmanism.

But the story of the glorious role that Kashmir played in the development of Mahayana and its propagation in distant Central Asia and China, is still preserved in Buddhist texts and translations in Ceylon, Tibet and China. Kashmir became a high school of Mahayana Buddhism during the time of Kanishka's rule and after, and attracted scholars and pilgrims from distant lands who studied the Buddhist texts at the feet of the learned pandits of the Valley. It was here that the Graeco-Buddhist art of Gandhara found its adherents who carried it to far off places in Central Asia and China.

Before we take up this account it will be useful to trace the history and development of the various Buddhist doctrines culminating in the emergence of Mahayana or Northern Buddhism in which form it is prevalent in China, Tibet, Japan and Nepal. That this school of Buddhism was born in Kashmir and developed by Kashmiri scholars who brought the impress of Kashmir Saivism to bear upon it, is an established fact. It will not, therefore, be out of place to give a brief outline of this very important development in this great religion particularly in relation to the spread of Buddhism in countries beyond the Himalayas.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF MAHAYANA

The teachings of Buddha during his lifetime and immediately afterwards (500 B.C.) found a ready and enthusiastic audience among the general population of Madhyadesha who realized a new salvation and relief in his doctrine. They had been groaning under the heavy burden of archaic and complicated Brahmanic rites and rituals and the powerful upper castes. It was thus a revolutionary movement aimed at the overthrow of the Brahmanic domination and although Buddhism had some Brahman followers, the majority came from the lower castes.

"For some two centuries after Gautama's death we have little information as to the geographical extension of his doctrine, but some of the Sanskrit versions of the *Vinaya* represent him as visiting Muttra, North-west India and Kashmir."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sir Charles Eliot : *Hinduism & Buddhism*, p. 263.

There is nothing improbable in the supposition that the first missionary activity was in the direction of Muttra and Kashmir. 'Muttra was the centre of a powerful school of orthodox Brahmanism and Kashmir was from ancient times the seat of Saivism. These two divisions of the Hindu philosophy dominated the Indian mind from the north to the south and it was therefore necessary to convince and convert the learned pandits at these strongholds, just as in the 12th century A.D. Ramanuja, leader of the Vaishnava belief, felt compelled to travel from distant Madras with the special object of combating the rival Saiva creed in Kashmir, its fountain-head.

Besides this, the pleasant climate and beautiful scenery of Kashmir are said to have been praised by Gautama himself. In the *Samyuktavastu* (chap. xl. trans. in J.A. 1914) the Buddha is represented as saying that Kashmir is the best land for meditation and leading a religious life. And when, therefore, Buddhism attained the status of a state religion under Ashoka, Kashmir was one of the first countries to receive his attention. It was in his time that the second Buddhist council was held at Patliputra which resulted in the codification of the Hinayana or the Lesser Vehicle. Ashoka visited Kashmir twice and founded the city of Srinagar (Puranadhisthana). He took with him five thousand monks and built numerous *viharas* for them there. When he left for his capital he made a gift of Kashmir to the Sangha considering it to be the fittest place for the study and propagation of the Doctrine.

The learned pandits of Kashmir imbued with the spirit of toleration and ever ready to investigate and learn every new thought, received the canon with all the respect due to it and after critically studying it gave it a new interpretation suiting the times and the aspirations of the people. Thus was produced the Mahayana or the Great Vehicle, which while holding fast to the real foundations of Buddhism, its ethical views of self-conduct and charity, is in fact an entirely new religion.

The popularity of old Buddhism rested chiefly on the simplicity of its doctrine, namely, that the state of the untrammelled self (Atman) is bliss and therefore birth is misery. The cause of misery is desire and therefore the cessation of desire and the path leading to that, is right behaviour and right concentration of thought. But the complete denial or negation of the existence of a Supreme Being or a personal God could not for long keep the minds of the general mass of people attached to this form of religion. The end which the followers of the Hinayana school seek is the redemption of man from this toilsome world of birth and death by absorption in the Brahma, not felicity in a higher and better world.

This pessimistic outlook on life and the world was doubly enhanced by the central point of Hinayana—the doctrine of Arhatship, a system of ethical and mental self-culture in which deliverance was found from all mysteries of sorrows of life in a change of heart to be reached here on this earth. This school had taught that Gautama was a Buddha, a man who by self-denying efforts continued through many hundreds of different births had acquired the ten *paramitas* or cardinal virtues in such perfection that he was able, when sin and ignorance had gained the upper hand throughout the world, to save the human race from impending ruin by preaching the doctrine of Arhatship. In other words the older school laid stress on individual's own efforts for his own salvation.

To the saints and scholars of Kashmir deeply learned in more subtle and higher philosophies, this doctrine seemed crude as well as incapable of keeping the masses attached to it for long. Coming into contact with these master-minds, the simple creed of early Buddhism got permeated with their refined ritualistic and philosophic teachings. Kashmir, from the earliest times, seems to have been the home of the great division of Hindu religion—Saivism. And well suited it was. Situated in the very heart of the Himalayas and possessing beautiful valleys, springs, rivers, lakes and snow-clad mountains, it seemed to be the land associated with all the mythological stories of Siva and His consort Parvati. The winter when all plant life is dead and the trees are shorn of their leaves ; the crisp and life-giving spring when Nature slowly comes to life ; and the luscious green summer when all around there is plenty and prosperity, were a dramatic representation of Siva the destroyer, Durga the creator and Parvati the preserver. Amongst such divine surroundings, the great *rishis* in their quiet hermitages like that of Vasagupta at Harwan, perfected a philosophy of a high order. Although Kashmir Saivism reached its highest glory during the eighth and ninth centuries A.D., its origin and study go back to a much earlier period.

The philosophic literature of Mahayana, therefore, bears a deep impress of Kashmir Saivism whose doctrines revolve round their fundamental conceptions of Siva and Sakti. Siva is the Reality which underlies, as its innermost and true self, not only every experiencing being but also everything else in the universe. His nature has primarily a two-fold aspect, an immanent aspect in which he pervades the universe and a transcendental aspect in which he is beyond all universal manifestations. And universe, with all its infinite variety of objects and means of experience is nothing but a manifestation of the immanent aspect (Sakti). This Sakti is not in any way different from or independent of Siva, but is one and the same with Him and His Creative



Power, spoken of as his feminine aspect.

This belief in Siva or a Supreme Being and the adaptation of the various gods and goddesses of the Saiva cult for their own purposes readily filled up the lacunae in the early Buddhism (Hinayana).

Besides, the leaders of Mahayana urged their followers to seek to attain, not so much to Arhatship, which would involve their own salvation but to Bodhisatvaship,<sup>1</sup> by the attainment of which they would be conferring the blessings of the Dhamma upon countless multitudes in the long ages of the future. By thus laying stress on the Bodhisatvaship rather than upon Arhatship, the new school were altering the direction of their mental vision.

The older type of Buddhist could become an Arhat (deserving) and so attain *nirvana* in the sense of annihilation or absorption into the Universal Self. But the newer one could become a Bodhisatva (one whose nature consists in enlightenment, hence destined to become a Buddha) who, though he became entitled by the sanctity of many lives to attain *nirvana* remained alive as a god to help the seeker after release ; while Buddha through transcendental philosophical appreciation of him as a superman became a great saviour-god. The old or Lesser Vehicle (Hinayana) could only appeal to the few, whereas the new or the Great Vehicle was open to all. And the opinion that every leader of their religious circle, every teacher distinguished among them for his sanctity of life, or for his extensive learning, was a Bodhisatva who might have and who probably had inherited the *karma* of some great teacher of old, gave a new hope and a blissful vision to the traveller on the Path.

“In fact the teachers of the Mahayana school were not slow to perceive that if Buddhism was to gain any hold over the masses, it was essential that it should adapt itself to their human needs. It became imperatively necessary, as a simple preservative measure, to convert a cold philosophical creed based on an ultra-pessimistic theory of existence, into some sort of belief in the value of human life as worth living. And if life was not to be an invariable current of misery it followed that there must also be some sort of faith in a superintending God, controlling their life and interesting Himself in man's welfare.”<sup>2</sup>

The chief school of the Mahayanists thus taught devotion to the many Buddhas and their attendant Bodhisatvas ; they created for their

1 Bodhisatvas are exalted beings who have reached Buddhahood, but who deliberately decline to enter into *nirvana* in order that they might devote themselves to saving mankind.—Rawlinson, *India*.

2 Sir M. Monier Williams : *Buddhism in its connexion with Brahmanism and Hinduism*, p. 173.

*nirvana* a dwelling place, a Heaven ; and they attributed to the Bodhisatvas the will and the power to give assistance to mankind ; Buddhas and Bodhisatvas both being also made subject to transmigration and reincarnation. Thus they evolved the worship of Maitreya, the Dhyani Buddhas, Manjusri, and Avlokiteshwar. The first of these appears in ancient Buddhism as the name of the Buddha to come and the last is the holy spirit of the Mahayanist school. Among the Dhyani Buddhas who are philosophic abstractions corresponding to earthly Buddhas, Amitabha, *i.e.*, Infinite Light, is the Heavenly counterpart of Gautama and soon took the most important place. Avlokiteshwar proceeds from him and manifests him to the world since the death of Buddha.<sup>1</sup> He is like Siva destroyer of the evil and the fountain of eternal bliss. Sakti the manifestation of energy is the essential counterpart of Siva and is often worshipped more than the latter. Similarly the female counterpart of the male Avolkiteshwar is the form of the god chiefly worshipped in China and Japan. In these countries he is known in the feminine character of Kwan-Yin, "Goddess of Mercy", and in this form is represented with two arms but oftener with four or more.

"The connection of Avlokiteshwar with Siva," says Sir M. Monier Williams, "is proved by the fact that in some characteristics Kwan-Yin corresponds to Durga form of Siva's wife and in others to the form called Parvati, who as dwelling in the mountains, may be supposed to look down with compassion on the world."<sup>2</sup>

As may be expected voluminous literature on the new doctrine and its various branches was written during and before the reign of Kanishka. The home of early Buddhism was round about Kosala and Maghada, subject indeed to Brahman influence, but where the sacred language was never more than a learned tongue and where the exclusive claims of the Brahmans had never been universally admitted. The Mahayana or the Great Vehicle arose in the very stronghold of Brahmanism and among a people to whom Sanskrit was a familiar tongue. The new literature, therefore, which the new movement called forth was written and has been preserved in Sanskrit.

The philosophy developed chiefly on the lines of Sarvastivadins (All Things Exist System) or realist school. Nagarjuna, the philosopher who lived in the first century A.D. and was a contemporary of Kanishka, is the founder of the Madhyamika or the Middle Way which ended in Buddhist Kanteism. Later on Asangha and Vasabandhu laid the foundation of a third school, the Vignanvad, holding that all phenomena are illusion and nothing but thought.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> Dr. T.W. Rhys Davids : *Buddhism*.

Though the early Buddhist doctrine had been carried to China through Indian missionaries in the second century B.C. it could not take a firm root there. It was, however, three centuries later that Mahayana, after gaining in strength and popularity and attaining the status of a state religion under Kanishka, was with great success carried to Central Asia and China mostly by Kashmirian missionaries.

"The beginning of the Christian era was a period when north-western India witnessed a great fusion of ideas and Indian, Persian and Greek religion must have been in contact at the university town of Taxila and countries round about it. Kashmir too, if somewhat secluded to be a meeting place of nations, was a considerable intellectual centre."<sup>1</sup> All this is amply proved by the different legends and figures depicted on the coins of Kanishka, the most famous of the Kushan conquerors who ruled over north-western India and Central Asia. His authority had its nucleus in Kashmir but it extended to both sides of the Himalayas from Yarkand and Khotan to Agra and Sind. It has been established that at the beginning of his reign he was not a Buddhist but adopted this creed later on, perhaps due to the influence of the Kashmirian monks whom he patronised. He was so enamoured of his new religion that he wanted to beat the record of Ashoka in its propagation. But the existence of conflicting and contradictory schools of thought among the followers of Buddha's religion, confused him and, therefore, under the advice of Parsva his religious preceptor, he decided to call a Council of the learned doctors on the model of the one held at Patliputra during Ashoka's reign. It was as a direct result of Ashoka's Council that Buddhism was carried to countries south of the Indian peninsula—Ceylon, Burma, Java, etc. Kanishka's Council gave a fresh impetus to the faith. Tibet, South Central Asia, and China lay along the great missionary routes of Northern Buddhism; the Kirghiz are said to have carried Buddhist settlements as far as the Caspian; on the east the religion was introduced into Korea in 372 A.D. and thence into Japan in 552 A.D.<sup>2</sup> The Council is important also for the fact that it marks the point of separation between northern and southern Buddhism, from now onwards Mahayanists gained a position superior to that of the Hinayanists.

#### KANISHKA'S BUDDHIST COUNCIL

That this most important event in the history of Buddhism should have been remembered as late as the seventh century A.D. when Heun Tsiang visited Kashmir is but natural. He gives a vivid picture of the

1 Eliot; *Op. Cit.*

2 W.W. Hunter in *Ancient India*, p. 161,



proceedings of the Council collected from a study of its records and reports maintained in different libraries in Kashmir which were extant then. Paramarth (499-560 A.D.) in his life of Vasubandhu also gives an account of the Council, but though differing in detail generally agrees with the observations of Heun Tsiang. He says that the king acting in consultation with Parsva issued summonses to all the learned doctors of his realm. They came in such numbers that a severe test was imposed and only 499 Arhats were selected. There was some discussion as to the place of meeting but finally Kashmir was selected and the king built a residential monastery for the Brethren to reside and hold their meetings in.<sup>1</sup>

When the Council met at the Kundalvan Monastery near the capital of Kashmir,<sup>2</sup> there arose a question as to whether Vasumitra should be admitted, seeing that he was not an Arhat but aspired to the career of a Bodhisatva. However, later on he was not only admitted but made the President. This was a signal victory for the Mahayanists. Other celebrated scholars including Asvagosh, Vasumitra and Nagarjuna took part in the deliberations. Writes Heun Tsiang :

“Then there were in the congregation certain priests versed in the doctrine of the Great Vehicle, viz., Visudhasimha, Jinabandhu, and of the Sarvastivadin school the following : Sugatamitra, Vasumitra ; and of the school of Mahasangika the following: Surgadar and Jinamitra.”

About the scholars of Kashmir who took part in the Council, Heun Tsiang remarks :

“The country from remote times was distinguished for learning and these priests were all of high religious merit and conspicuous virtues, as well as of manner, talent and power of exposition of doctrine ; and though the priests of other nations were in their own way distinguished yet they could not be compared with these—so different were they from the ordinary class.”<sup>3</sup>

The Council which sat for six months made strenuous efforts to bring into order the scattered sayings, theories and dictums of various doctors of the Law. The texts of the *Tripitaka* were collected and the Council :

“composed 100,000 stanzas of Upadesh Sastras explanatory of the Canonical sutras ; 100,000 stanzas of Vinaya Vibhasa Sastras, explanatory of the *Vinaya* ; and 100,000 stanzas of Abhidharma Vibhasa Sastra, explanatory of the *Abhidharma*. For this

1 Eliot ; *Op. Cit.*

2 Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 283.

3 *Life*, translated by Beal.

exposition of the *Tripitaka* all the learning from remote antiquity was thoroughly examined ; the general sense and the terse language was again and again made clear and distinct and learning was widely diffused for the safe guiding of the disciples."

The Kanishka commentaries were written in the Sanskrit language because the Kashmiri and the northern priests who formed his Council belonged to the isolated Aryan colonies, which had been little influenced by the growth of the Indian vernacular dialects. In this it was distinct from Ashoka's Council who wrote all their books in Pali.

"King Kanishka caused the treatise when finished to be written out on copper plates and enclosed these in stone boxes which he deposited in a tope made for the purpose. He then ordered spirits to keep and guard the texts and not to allow any to be taken out of the country by heretics (non-Buddhists) ; those who wished to study them could do so in the country. When leaving to return to his country, Kanishka renewed Ashoka's gift of all Kashmir to the Buddhist Church."<sup>1</sup>

Although some efforts have recently been made to find the buried copper plates engraved with the proceedings of the Council, no trace has yet been found of them. They perhaps still lie somewhere near-about the old city of Srinagar and wait to be unearthed by some future lucky archaeologist.<sup>2</sup>

Kanishka's Council marks the beginning of a new epoch in the history of Buddhism. The Council gave an official and a superior status to the Mahayanist Doctrine which may rightly be said to have been born and developed in Kashmir.

#### DISTINGUISHED ACARYAS

The composition of the *Vibhasa-sastras* in Kashmir indicates that Kashmir grew up to be an academic centre attracting distinguished *acaryas* from other places. The accounts of the Chinese travellers and Paramartha show that Katayaniputra, Asvaghosa, Vasubandhu, Vasumitra, Dharmatrata, Sanghabhadra, Visuddhasimha, Jinabandhu, Sugtmitra, Suryadeva, Jinatrata, Kankavatsa and many other distinguished teachers and writers lived in Kashmir from the time of Kanishka. Taranath tells us that during the reign of Kanishka, one wealthy Brahman called Sutra maintained the Vaibhasika teacher Dharmatrata and the earliest Sautrantika teacher Mahabhadanta Sthavira

1 *Ibid.*

2 The present writer was told by late Madhusudan Kaul, Superintendent of Kashmir Research Department that Kundalvan may be identified with Kuntulun on the spur of Zebwan hill overlooking the Dal Lake in Srinagar,

along with their disciples. Dharmatrata is well known as one of the four renowned *acaryas* of the Vaibhasika school, the other three being Ghosaka of Tukhara, Vasumitra of Maru, and Buddhadeva of Varanasi. Vasumitra is another famous figure of Kashmir, but there are five authors bearing this name. The Sautrantika teacher Srilabha was an inhabitant of Kashmir. He was a disciple of Kunala. Samghabhadra was another Kashmirian *acarya* who was a profound scholar of the Vibhasa-sastras of the Sarvastivada school. He wrote a commentary on Vasumitra's *Prakaranapada* and was the author of the *Abhidharma-vatara-sastra*. One of his distinguished students is Vasubandhu who studied with him the six systems of philosophy and the art of dialectics. He compressed the Abhidharma texts and their Vibhasas in his *Abhidharmakosa* and *Bhasya* and sent them to the Kashmir Vaibhasikas who were greatly pleased with them. Vasubandhu later on turned from the Sarvastivada point of view to the Sautrantika as is evidenced in the expression of his opinions in the *Bhasya* and which elicited vehement criticisms from Sanghabhadra who was a staunch Sarvastivadin and wrote two treatises to refute Vasubandhu's later views.

Gunaprabha and Vimalamitra are the two other teachers whose names occur in the Records of Heun Tsiang. Gunaprabha is mentioned by Taranath and Bu-ston as a great authority on the Vinaya of the Mulasarvastivadin and as the author of several works. Heun Tsiang refers to the monastery at Matipur where he composed his treatises. As regards Vimalamitra, Heun Tsiang writes that he was a native of Kashmir and an adherent of the Sarvata (*i.e.* Sarvastivada) school having made a profound study of canonical and heterodox scriptures. He had travelled in India to learn the mysteries of the Tripitaka.

#### KASHMIRI BUDDHIST MISSIONARIES

As a result of Kanishka's Council, there burst forth an enthusiastic missionary spirit among the Kashmiris who carried this religion to China across difficult passes and thus produced a great fermentation and controversy in Chinese thought. One has only to compare the China of the Hans with the China of the T'angs to see how great was the change wrought by this faith. The diffusion of the Indian influence was due to the activities of these missionaries which were exclusively Buddhist and the preponderating number came from Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

The intervening tract of Central Asia came naturally first under the influence of the Buddhist doctrine. Although the movement of Central Asian tribes commonly took the form of invading India, yet the current of culture was in the opposite direction.

<sup>1</sup> Thomas Watters: *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*.



For instance, traditions respecting the origin of Khotan preserved in the travels of Heun Tsiang and also in the Tibetan Scriptures some of which are expressly said to be translations from the language of the Li, are popular legends, but they agree in essentials and appear to contain a kernel of important truth, namely that Khotan was founded by two streams of colonisation coming from China and from India, the latter being somehow connected with Ashoka. It is remarkable that the introduction of Buddhism is attributed not to these original colonists but to a later missionary who, according to Heun Tsiang, came from Kashmir. The Tibetan text gives the date of conversion as the reign of King Vijayasambhava, 170 years after the foundation of Khotan. At that time, a monk named Vairocana who was an incarnation of Manjusri, came to Khotan from Kashmir. He is said to have introduced a new language as well as Mahayanism and the King Vijayasambhava built for him the great monastery of Tsarma outside the capital, which was miraculously supplied with relics (about 80 B.C. or 60 A.D.).<sup>1</sup>

#### KASHMIRI MISSIONARIES IN CHINA

"Kashmir," says Dr P.C. Bagchi,<sup>2</sup> "takes the leading part in the transmission of Buddhist traditions directly to China. The number of Buddhist scholars who went to China from Kashmir is larger than that of those who went from other parts of India. Kashmir was the most flourishing centre of Buddhist learning in India in this period. It was the centre of the most powerful Buddhist sect of Northern India, the Sarvastivada."

Among numerous scholars and Buddhist monks who elected to work in China as exiles from their mother country, for the sacred mission of carrying to China the message of Indian and Buddhist culture, a short account of a few as recorded in the Chinese texts would be of interest. That a number of Kashmiri monks and missionaries risked their lives to carry the message across difficult mountain passes, can easily be imagined, considering the rapid spread of Buddhism in the vast sub-continent of China.

Much of the missionary activity of the Kashmirian Buddhists seems to have been centred round the celebrated KUMARAJIVA who must have made many intimate connections with the Kashmiri scholars of his time while he was receiving education in Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> His father

1 Stein : *Ancient Khoten*.

2 *India and China*. For the account of these Kashmiri monks, I am indebted to the information given in this illuminating book of Dr Bagchi.

3 William Gemmel in his translation of the "*Diamond Sutra*" says that Kumarajiva was a native of Kashmir,

Kumarayana is said to have been a minister of a petty king by hereditary right. For reasons not known he gave up this job and went to Kucha where he slowly rose to the position of Rajguru. While in Kucha a princess, Jiva, of the royal family fell in love with him and they were married. They had a son whom they named Kumarajiva. We learn that just after his birth Jiva, his mother, turned a nun, taking the responsibility of Kumarajiva's upbringing herself. After giving him some rudimentary education at Kucha, she took him, while only of nine years, to Kashmir for further study. In Kashmir he studied under a learned Buddhist scholar Bandhudatta. Kumarajiva's intelligence and manners won him many admirers and friends among his fellow students and teachers and when after completing his studies, he returned to Kucha he was accompanied there by a large number of Kashmirian scholars. At Kucha he established a monastery and undertook the translation of Sanskrit Buddhist texts and in collaboration with his Kashmirian followers explained these to the Central Asian and Chinese audiences which flocked to hear his sermons.

Living though in this remote corner of Asia his fame spread far and wide and he was recognised as an encyclopaedia of Indian learning including a knowledge of the Vedas. In 383 A.D. Fu-Chien, Emperor of the Tsin dynasty sent his general Lu-kuang to subdue Kucha. The expedition was successful and among the captives taken was the celebrated Kumarajiva. Lu-kuang was so pleased with the magnificent and comfortable life of Kucha that he thought of settling there, but Kumarajiva prophesied that he was destined to higher things. So they left to try their fortune in China. Lu-kuang rose to be the ruler of the state known as Southern Liang and his captive and adviser became one of the greatest names in Chinese Buddhism. At the express request of the Chinese Emperor he consented to go to the capital in 401 A.D. He carried on his mission there and was later joined by many of his Kashmirian monks. He died in the capital of China in 413 A.D.

Kumarajiva himself was a literary genius or at least had a genius for clarifying the minds of some good scholars whom the emperor of his day lent to him for translation work *e.g.*, the two celebrated Kashmiri collaborators of his, YASA and VIMALAKSHA. Between them the members of this group succeeded in giving a real Chinese contact to ideas which had hitherto been only nebulous and elusive. The most influential of the many works translated by Kumarajiva and his collaborators was the "Lotus Flower Scripture of the Mysterious Law." There had been three or four translations of it before, but not apparently with any great success. This time it got home, as well it might. It is

an amazing work, a drama of time and eternity.<sup>1</sup>

Mereopole says that Kashmiri monks went and spread Buddhism in other parts of China. A Kashmiri monk, SANGHABUTI, reached the northern capital of China in 381 A.D. His activities can be traced till 383-84. At the request of Chinese scholars, he translated some Buddhist texts like *Vinayapitaka* from Sanskrit to Chinese. He also wrote an exhaustive commentary on it. It is not known whether he returned to Kashmir or passed the rest of his life in China.

While Sanghabuti was in China a greater scholar named GAUTAM-SANGHA went from Kashmir to the northern capital of China with a number of Kashmirian followers. He reached Ch'ang-ngan in 384 A.D. The Chinese records mention that he was a profound scholar and a born teacher. He stayed for a few years at Ch'ang-ngan, where he translated a number of Buddhist texts into Chinese. Being a master of Abhidharma he wrote several books on this branch of Buddhism and also revised many previous translations of the texts. He had acquired a proficiency in the Chinese language. Later he came to know that a powerful school of Buddhist learning had been established at Lu-shan in the south of China by a Sogdian monk, Hui-yuan, who by the way played a great part in the co-ordination of Buddhist learning in China. Gautamsangha, therefore, decided to go to Lu-shan and reaching there in 391 A.D. gave himself up heart and soul to the propagation of the Buddhist doctrine. There also he translated a number of Buddhist texts with the help of his Kashmirian collaborators. Thence he went to Nanking and gained enormous influence among the ruling classes. One of the nobles built a monastery for him where he carried on his literary work.

Two Kashmirian scholars associated with the great Kumarajiva have been mentioned by the Chinese texts in connection with the translation of Buddhist sacred books and writing of commentaries thereon. They are PUNYATRATA and his pupil DHARMAYASA. We do not know much about Punyatrata except that he perhaps went to China at the invitation of Kumarajiva towards the end of the fourth or the beginning of the fifth century and worked with him in 404 A.D. He was also at Kucha when Kumarajiva was taken as prisoner to China and followed him there to help him in his missionary work.

About Dharmayasa we know a little more. He was the son of a Kashmiri Brahman and came in contact with Punyatrata at the age of 14. After thoroughly studying the Buddhist and other literature he left for China at the age of thirty. He travelled extensively in Asia,

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1 E.R. Hughes and K. Hughes : *Religion in China*



converting a large number of people to his faith and writing books. He reached China 397-401 and remained there till the period 432-435. In collaboration with a large number of Kashmirian scholars then working in China, he translated several important works into Chinese. He then returned to Central Asia and probably to Kashmir.

Among celebrated Kashmirian monks who were adventurous enough to travel across the high mountains into China, the name of BUDDHAYASAS stands high. He was the only son of a Kashmiri Brahman who was no believer in Buddhism. One day a monk called at his door for alms, but the old Brahman in his rage attacked him and turned him out. Retribution followed soon. The hand that had struck the monk was paralysed and in order to expiate the sin, the Brahman went in search of him. He requested him to come to his house and meekly and devoutly begged for pardon and to show his deep reverence to the monk offered him his only son Yasa to be taken into the fold. The monk accepted him. Yasa was then only thirteen years of age and after undergoing a thorough training in the various Buddhist texts was given the robe of a monk. At the age of twenty-seven he left for China to preach to the people there. He reached Kashghar where while partaking of a feast given annually by the Chief of that city to the Buddhist monks he attracted the Chief's attention. There were three thousand more in the city but the demeanour and the vast learning of Yasa captivated the mind of the Chief who became his devout follower and kept him in Kashghar for a number of years. It was here that he came in contact with Kumarajiva who was travelling to Kucha and who stayed in Kashghar for some time. Both of them worked together at some translation. When Kucha was invaded by the Chinese the Chief of Kashghar went to its aid leaving Yasa in charge of his son. But he was too late, Kucha having meanwhile fallen to the Chinese general and Kumarajiva taken as a prisoner to China. When Yasa learnt of this his heart saddened and he longed to join Kumarajiva in Ch'anggan. Here also he was responsible for translating a number of works into Chinese. When Kumarajiva died, Yasa lost heart and returned to Kashmir. Between 410-413 A.D. he translated four works into Chinese among which were *Dirghagama* and *Dharmaguptaka-Vinaya*. He was a monk of high moral sense and always refused to accept any presents in cash or kind, saying that to accept presents was derogatory to a monk.

We are told of another Kashmiri collaborator of Kumarajiva VIMALAKSHA, who had gone with him to Kucha and when he was taken as a prisoner to China, followed him there. He worked with him in China from 406 to 413 translating several works with him there and

explaining them to the people and the students. After Kumarajiva's death in 413 he went to south China and worked there for the rest of his life.

South China had also its batch of Kashmiri missionaries. BUDDHAJIVA, who was a collaborator and companion of Fa-Hien reached south China by sea in 423. Fa-Hien had during his travels in Central Asia and India collected a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts some of which were later translated by Buddhajiva into the Chinese language. He also probably worked in China for the rest of his life.

But one of the greatest sons of Kashmir who was responsible for converting the whole of Java and the neighbouring islands to the Buddhist faith was GUNAVARMAN. He was a prince of the royal family of Kashmir. His grandfather Haribhadra being a tyrant was banished from his kingdom and had to spend the rest of his life as a wanderer in mountains and marshes. His father, Sanganand, also was an exile. From his very childhood Gunavarman was religious by nature and at an early age he thoroughly grasped the Buddhist Scriptures and committed thousands of *sutras* to memory. It appears that at that time the king of Kashmir died issueless and the nobles and ministers decided to invite Gunavarman to be the king. But he was so imbued with the religious and missionary zeal that he refused the offer and instead started on a long pilgrimage to the holy Buddhist places in India. He then went to Ceylon where he was warmly welcomed by the Buddhist community. He worked with eminent scholars there and was responsible for improving the customs of the people of Ceylon. Thence he went to Java. Fa-Hien tells us that in 418 A.D. Brahmanism flourished in Java and the Buddhists were not worth mentioning. This position, however, changed altogether only a few years later due to the preachings of Gunavarman. The king and his family were the first to be converted by him to the Buddhist faith in 423 A.D. and the population soon followed suit. Being a Kashmiri, Gunavarman was most probably a Sarvastivadin which explains the study of this school of philosophy by the Javanese Buddhists.

Gunavarman's fame spread far and wide and emissaries from the neighbouring islands came in large numbers inviting him to visit their homeland. At last the Emperor of China also came to know about his work and the Buddhist theologians there requested him to send emissaries to Java to ask Gunavarman to visit China. When they came to him, he agreed to go to Nanking where he reached in 431 A.D. after converting nearly all the islands on the way. In Nanking, the Emperor himself went out to receive him and built a magnificent monastery for him—Jetavanvihara—after the name of the famous monastery in India.

Gunavarman was, however, destined to live only for a year in Nanking where he died in 432 A.D. But it seems that this last year of his life was of intense activity since no less than fourteen works were either translated or written by him in this year.

The mention of Jetavana monastery reminds us of another Kashmirian monk who worked there and probably met Gunavarman in 431. He was DHARMAMITRA, a famous teacher of Dhyana or meditative school. He translated several Sanskrit works on meditation into the Chinese language and also taught a large number of students in this branch of Buddhist philosophy. He was a quiet worker. At first he had gone to Kucha where the authorities would not allow him to proceed to China. He, however, evaded the frontier guards and reached Tun-huang where he founded a monastery and planted thousands of trees round it. It was in 424 A.D. that he went to South China and lived up to there his death in 442 A.D. He translated twelve Buddhist texts into the Chinese language.

BUDDHAVARMAN another Kashmiri monk went to western China shortly before 433 A.D. and being a specialist in Vibhasa translated *Mahavibhasa sastra* in sixty chapters during the years 437-439 A.D.

We hear of another Kashmirian missionary, RATNACINTA, who originally belonged to a royal family and was a specialist in Vinaya. He went to China reaching Lo-yang in 693 A.D. He founded a monastery there named T'ien-chu-sse, "The Monastery of India" and translated seven works from Sanskrit between 693 to 706. He died in 721 A.D.

During the tenth century the Chinese Annals mention the name of T'IENTSI-TSAI, a native of Kashmir, who came to the Chinese capital and was put in charge of a board of translators by the Chinese emperor and it was as a result of his efforts that the board was able to enrich the Chinese Buddhist literature by more than two hundred works.

In 1005 another Kashmiri monk MU-LO-SHE-KI, went to China and carried on the missionary work in collaboration with many more Indian monks.

Kashmir had been the high school of Buddhist teachings. Numerous scholars well versed in the different philosophical branches of this great doctrine laboured at producing works of deep merit and imparting education to students coming from far and near. Indian students who came to Kashmir for higher studies were inspired by the example of Kashmirian workers in China and after hearing of their wonderful exploits many of them followed their footprints in that land.



## IN TIBET.

Let us now turn our attention to the mysterious land of Tibet. "Though the earliest entrance of Buddhism into Tibet," says Sir Henry Yule,<sup>1</sup> "was from India proper, yet Kashmir twice in the history of Tibetan Buddhism played a most important part. As a direct result of Kanishka's Council, numerous missionaries went forth from Kashmir to spread the doctrine in Tibet. Many of the pandits who laboured at the translation of the sacred books into Tibetan were Kashmiris and it was even in Kashmir that several of the translations were made. But these were not the only circumstances that made Kashmir the holy land to the Northern Buddhists. In the end of the ninth century, the religion was extirpated in Tibet by the Julian of the Lamas, the great persecutor Lang Dharma, and when it was restored a century later, it was from Kashmir in particular that fresh missionaries were procured to reinstruct the people in the forgotten Law."

At present the Tibetans are either the followers of the Bonpa or that of the Lama religions, which flourish side by side, and are often indistinguishable from one another except perhaps through the colour of the dress worn by the monks of the two orders. The older, Bonpa, is said to have its origin in prehistoric times, but the native records mention that Bonpa received a regular shape and order in the 3rd century B.C. coincident with the arrival in the country of three Bon priests—from Kashmir, Dusha, and Shagshung. Coming to the historical times, we find that the Bon *sutras* and rituals were put down in regular books by a pandit from Kashmir. The Bon religion thereafter grew in importance and there was an incessant flow of Kashmirian teachers to that land. For instance we learn from Chinese sources that there was a Kashmiri named SAKYA SHRIBHADRA who went to Tibet in 405 A.D. and taught people there. He was an expert in logic. He also knew the Tibetan language and wrote seven books on Buddhism in Sanskrit and translated several of them into Tibetan. Another Kashmiri, RATNAVJERA went to Bodh Gaya and was in charge of one of the departments of Vikramasila university and subsequently he went to Udyana (Swat) and thence to Tibet. He wrote fourteen books on Buddhism.<sup>1</sup>

The greatest figure, however, who is responsible for the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet and the formation of Tibetan script and grammar is the great Shyama Bhatta, known in Tibet as THUMI SAMBHOTA and worshipped as an incarnation of Manjusri.<sup>2</sup> He rose to be the minister of the great Tibetan king Srong Tsan Gampo who was

1 Pandit Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit* p. 29

2 *Ibid.*, p. 30.

born a little after 600 A.D. He was the founder of Lhasa, the present capital of Tibet, and in 632 he formally asked Sambhota to preach to his people. Sambhota later paid a visit to Kashmir in search of sacred books and Kashmirian scholars and when he again settled in Tibet, he with his Kashmirian collaborators translated several Sanskrit treatises into Tibetan. The Tibetan had hitherto been an oral language only but in order that the sacred books might be translated, a written character was invented by Sambhota. This was based on the Sanskrit alphabet as then used in Kashmir. The most famous of all works ascribed to him is the *Mani Kambum*, "The Myriad of Precious Words"—a treatise chiefly on religion but which also contained an account of the introduction of Buddhism into Tibet. He is also the author of the standard work on Tibetan Buddhism, the *Samatog*, on which the civil laws of Tibet are formed.

Thumi Sambhota exercised an enormous influence over King Srang Tsan Gampo and his two queens. They became devout followers of the new faith and carried on the mission to the farthest corners of Tibet. The two queens are till today worshipped under the name of Dara-cke, "The Golden Mothers", being regarded as incarnations of Durga and Parvati. The King has also become a saint being looked upon as an incarnation of Avlokiteshwar.

Among the monks who came to Tibet during Srang Tsan Gampo's reign were TABUTA and GANUTA from Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

There were numerous Kashmiri monks and scholars active in Tibet for many centuries more. In 750 A.D. for instance, a Kashmiri monk named VAIROCANA, was among the best known translators of Sanskrit books into Tibetan. His usefulness, however, was interrupted for a while by the Tibetan wife of the then king, Thi Srong Detsan who, in her bitter opposition to the king's reforms and instigated by the Bonpa priests, secured the banishment of Vairocana to the eastern province of Khambay, a scheme similar to that practised by 'Potiphar's wife. But on her forthwith being afflicted with leprosy, she repented, and the young Vairocana was recalled and effected her cure. She is still however handed down to history as the "Red Rahula She-Devil" while Vairocana is made an incarnation of Buddha's faithful attendant and cousin Ananda.<sup>2</sup>

The zealous King Thi Srong Detsan founded monasteries freely and initiated a period of great literary activity by procuring many talented Indian scholars for the work of translating the Sanskrit canonical works and commentaries into Tibetan. The Kashmiri monks

1 Z.A. Waddel: *Buddhism of Tibet*, p. 30.

2 Eliot: *Hinduism and Buddhism*.

JINAMITRA, DANASILA and ANANDA were the best known of these workers.

The Augustus of Tibet was Ralpachan, who ruled in the 9th century A.D. He summoned from Kashmir many celebrated doctors who with the help of native assistants took seriously in hand the business of rendering the canon in Tibetan. They revised the existing translations and added many more of their own. The most prolific of Ralpachan's translators was JINAMITRA, a pandit of Kashmir described as belonging to the Vaibhasika school who translated a large part of Vinaya and many other *sutras*. Numerous works are also ascribed to SARVINANA-DEVA and DHARMAKA, both of Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

After the death of King Ralpachan there broke out a calculated and barbarous campaign against the Buddhists under King Lang Dharma. He was succeeded by King Yeshe-o, who seeing that this religion was about to die in Tibet, tried his best to revive it. He selected a batch of twenty-one promising and intelligent Tibetan youth and after giving them a preliminary training, sent them to Kashmir to study under Pandit Ratnavjira—the great Buddhist teacher. But to the great grief of the king only two of them—RATNABHADRA and SUPRAGYA returned alive, the rest perishing on the high passes. He, therefore, thought it best to invite Buddhist monks to Tibet and in response to his invitation SOMNATH KASHMIRI and SHRIBHADRA together with numerous other Kashmiri pandits went to Tibet to put in a new life into the dying religion.<sup>2</sup>

At the beginning of the 11th century also we hear of foreign monks arriving from various countries. The Tibetan chroniclers say that the chief workers in the new diffusion were La-chen and Lo-chen. LO-CHEN was a Kashmiri and several other Kashmirian Lamas are mentioned as working in Tibet.<sup>3</sup>

It is not surprising therefore that Marco Polo who visited China during the reign of Kublai Khan learnt from the Mongols and Lamas with whom he came in contact that they regarded Kashmir as the "very original source from which the religion had spread abroad." The feeling with which they looked to Kashmir must have been nearly the same as that with which the Buddhists of Burma looked to Ceylon.<sup>4</sup>

#### CHINESE PILGRIMS IN KASHMIR

Whereas Kashmiri monks, missionaries, writers and scholars

1 *Ibid.*

2 Rahul Sankrityayana : *Travels in Ladakh and Tibet* (Hindi).

3 *Pag San Jan Zang* : edited by S.C. Das, p. 183.

4 *The Book of Ser Marco Polo*, Trs. by Sir H. Yule, n-3, pp. 168-69.



were busy in propagating the religion and culture of India in the Chinese Empire, there was an unending stream of pilgrims and students coming from that country to the holy shrines of India and the seats of Indian learning. Kashmir which abounded in both and which stood astride the overland route to India, was thus the special object of these visits. The knowledge the pilgrims and students from China gained in the Valley was later diffused by them in their own country. Conversely, they were responsible for influencing the art and culture of Kashmir by that of their own country.

The records of these travellers not only throw a considerable light on the political, geographical and economic condition of Kashmir during their times but also give a vivid picture of many famous men of letters and their writings.

That the Chinese and Tibetan Bhikshus and pilgrims used to visit Kashmir in very great numbers is strikingly proved by an interesting verse in the *Rajatarangini*. Describing the reign of Meghavahana and the religious foundations of his queen Amritaprabha, Kalhana says—

“His queen Amritaprabha caused a vihara called Amritabhavana to be constructed *for the benefit of foreign Bhikshus*.

“The spiritual guide (*guru*) of her father, who had come from a foreign country called Loh and who in the language of that country was designated *stonpa* built the stupa called Lohstonpa.”

The Amritabhavana *vihara* has been identified by Stein at the Vantabhawan locality of Srinagar. This *vihara* was in a flourishing state during OU-KONG's visit (759 A.D.) who mentions it as the “Monastery of Ng o-mi-t'o-po-wan (transcribed as Amitabhavan). Vantabhawan is a suburb of Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir and is the terminus of the Leh-Srinagar route.

FA-HIEN visited India in 399 A.D, and although he personally did not pay a visit to the Valley proper, he nearly touched its frontiers. He visited Gilgit and Ladakh coming through the country of Eastern Turkistan. He mentions that Buddhism was in a flourishing condition in the country and the Indian sacred literature was widely diffused in Central Asia. He had a Kashmiri collaborator with him named BUDHAJIVA who accompanied him to China.

Soon after Fa-Hien, another Chinese monk, CHE-MONG, started from Ch'ang-ngan in 404 A.D. for a journey to India. He was accompanied by fourteen other monks and took a Kashmiri monk as a guide. After a strenuous journey over Central Asia they reached the Pamirs,

which Che-mong crossed with only six companions, the rest finding it too difficult for them to continue the journey. The Kashmiri guide also lost his life while crossing the passes. Che-mong and his companions stayed on in Kashmir for a pretty long time after which they started on a pilgrimage to holy Buddhist shrines in India. He returned to China in 424 A.D. taking the same route by which he had come.

Another Chinese monk, FA-YONG, started for India in 420 A.D. accompanied by a party of 20 monks. He came via Turfan, Kucha, Kashghar and then over the Pamirs and along the Gilgit valley reached Kashmir. Fa-yong and his companions passed more than a year in the Valley to study the Sanskrit language and the Buddhist lore. He then returned to China by sea visiting all the holy places in India on his way home.

HEUN TSIANG universally respected in China as the Great Master of the Law, came in search of further knowledge to India in 631 A.D. Travelling by the usual Central Asian route he entered Kashmir from Urusha (Hazara) in the west and passed two years (May 631 to April 633) in the Valley, studying the *sutras* and *sastras*. He was received with great pomp and show by the then king of Kashmir who sent his nephew to escort him from his first resting place in the Valley near Baramula to the palace in Srinagar. When Heun Tsiang approached the capital, the king of Kashmir, with his whole court came out in person to meet him.

"The road was covered with parasols and standards, and the whole route was strewn with flowers. Then he begged him to mount a large elephant and walked in his train."

The next day, after a feast in the palace, the king invited Heun Tsiang to begin courses on the difficult points in the doctrine.

"After hearing that the love of learning had brought him from distant lands and that when he desired to read he found himself without texts, he put twenty scribes at his disposal to obtain for him copies of the Buddhist gospel as well as of later philosophic treatises."

In Kashmir he found numerous religious institutions with more than 5000 monks residing in them. There was one temple containing the holy tooth relic of Buddha. Another *matha* was famous as the seat of the great master of *sastras*, Samghabhadra. There was another neighbouring monastery famous for its presiding sage Skandhila. He also noted two other monasteries as the abode of the two great masters Purna and Bodhila. His biographer tells us that the pilgrim found in

Kashmir a master aged seventy after his own heart, a learned Mahayanist doctor with whom he studied the works of Nagarjuna.

"This master of outstanding virtue observed the rules of discipline with a rigorous purism. He was gifted with a profound intellect and his vast learning embraced every branch of knowledge. His talents and his enlightenment partook of the divine and his benevolent heart was full of affection for the sages and of respect for the lettered. Heun Tsiang questioned him without reserve and gave himself up, night and day, to study with him with untiring zeal."

He himself has left us a very picturesque description of this "aerial paradise".

"The country," he says, "has a circumference of seven hundred leagues, and its four frontiers have a background of mountains of prodigious height. It is reached by very narrow passes. That is why none of the neighbouring princes has been able to attack it successfully. On the western side, the capital adjoins a large river. The country is suitable for the cultivation of grain and produces a great abundance of flowers. The climate is cold and glacial; much snow falls but there is little wind. The inhabitants are goodlooking but they are crafty, light and frivolous, and of a weak pusillanimous disposition. They wear woollen caps and white cotton clothes."

During his time the sway of the Kashmir king extended to Taxila.<sup>1</sup>

When he returned to China after performing the pilgrimage to various Buddhist centres and holy places in India, Heun Tsiang was given a fitting reception by his own king and he became the centre of great religious and literary activity where seekers after truth and knowledge came from far and near, who in turn diffused this knowledge particularly in Korea and Japan.

After Heun Tsiang we have the accounts of another Chinese traveller, OUKONG known also as Dharmadhatu. He came to Ki-pin in 759 A.D. through the Kabul Valley and Gandhara. He lived in Kashmir for four years and there he took the final vows of a Buddhist monk. He studied Sanskrit and learnt Vinaya in seven sections from three teachers. In the convent of Mong-te or Mundi-vihara, he learnt the *Silas* and studied the Vinaya of the Mulasarvastivadins. He refers

<sup>1</sup> For a detailed account of Heun Tsiang's travels, see *Life of Heun Tsiang* translated by Beal; Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, and Rene Grousset, *In the Footsteps of the Buddha*.



to the following seven of the Buddhist establishments besides the Mong-te *vihara*—

(1) Amitabhavana, (2) Ananga or Anandbhavana, (3) Ki-tche, (4) Nao-yi-le, (5) Jo-jo (6) Ye-li-t'e-lo, (7) K'o-toon. He noticed more than 300 monasteries in the kingdom and a large number of *stupas* and images. After four years of study he went to Gandhara and resided in the monastery of Jou-lo-li—a monastery carrying the name of the king its founder, belonging to the line of Kanishka.<sup>1</sup>

Since Heun Tsiang mentions only about 100 convents existing in his time in Kashmir, it can be concluded that there had been a rise in the popularity of Buddhism during the intervening period of a little more than one hundred years. Ou-kong also makes mention of the Zojila route as the highway leading to T'ou-fan or Tibet and of the Po-liu representing the present Gligit road.

#### GRAECO-BUDDHIST ART

Kashmir though not remaining directly under the sway of the Indo-Grecian empire for long, was yet profoundly affected by the Greek artistic influence. From bygone ages, the inhabitants of the Happy Valley have been known throughout the world as accomplished artisans, possessing an artistic bent of mind, influenced to a very great extent by their beautiful natural surroundings. Even their indigenous philosophy—the Kashmir Saivism—has raised art to the highest pinnacle as according to Abhinavagupta to knead nature into a work of art is the nearest approximation to the knowledge of godhead.

Kashmiris have been known to outsiders as *Shashtra Shilpina* or architects on account of their well known skill in building. Similarly, in the realm of sculpture they, like the Greeks, personified the natural objects and imparted to them life and vividness as beheld and experienced by them in their heavenly homeland. Religious fervour of these early artists found outward expression in the building of temples and ikonographs. The Cosmic Force, the animating principle of Indian Pantheism was worshipped, as noted above, under the name of Siva. He inspired the artist-sculptor of Kashmir. Siva as Terrible—Bhairava, Siva, as Saviour and above all Siva as the Ardhanareshwar united with his consort, Parvati, the Maid of the Mountains. Mr Grousset observes :

“There is a profound symbolism in this whose philosophic import we should be careful not to misinterpret, for it shows us the god of destruction as one and the same with the creative principle, the act of death as the source of generative power.”

<sup>1</sup> Watters, *On Yuan Chwang's Travels*, I—pp. 258-59.

This unique development in the Kashmir sculpture was carried to Central Asia, Tibet and China where under the influence of Buddhism, Avlokiteswar, the Adhi Buddha and the numerous Dhyani Buddhas are represented as both destructive power as well as creative energy. Right from the farthest corners of Central Asia to Japan and the uplands of Tibet, the influence of this art is apparent even to this day.

China has been deeply affected by the introduction of the Graeco-Buddhist art which followed in the wake of missionaries from Kashmir and the rest of India to that country. That the home of this school of art was Gandhara has now been established. The part which the Kashmiri artists played in the development of the Gandharan art has not been fully brought out by the authorities on the subject, presumably due to the paucity of archaeological data in the Valley. But the recent discoveries of terracotta tiles at Harvan and fragments of statuary at Ushkur, fill to a great extent this lacuna. All the same the close political and cultural ties existing between Kashmir and Gandhara in ancient times is proof positive of the fact that the Kashmiri artists must have been responsible to a great extent for the development of this famous school of ancient Graeco-Buddhist art. It will not, therefore, be out of place to deal with this important aspect in a more detailed manner.

The break-up of the Empire of Ashoka had the usual repercussions on the north-western province of India. The control of the central authority being weakened, renewed incursions into the Punjab by northern people took place. This time, the invaders were far advanced in civilization. The Greeks had set up an independent kingdom in Bactria and they crossed the Indian frontier and occupied Gandhara. As time went on, these Bactrian Greeks born in India were actually received into the fold of the Hindu religion. This fusion of the two people produced a remarkable synthesis of the Indo-Greek civilizations giving birth to the famous Gandhara school of art.<sup>1</sup>

With the movement of the Kushan horde, however, Gandhara came under their sway when Kadphises II overthrew the last Greek monarch, Hermaeus. The Kushans gradually reduced to subjection the various petty Greek, Parthian and Saka kingdoms and built up an extensive empire under Kanishka. The important role that Kashmir played politically and culturally under Kanishka has already been dealt with. The Hellenised art of Gandhara appealed to the Kushans and under Kanishka it flourished, travelling to far off places in India and Central Asia.

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<sup>1</sup> Rawlinson : *India—A Short Cultural History*.

Long before the Greeks penetrated to this region, Gandhara had close political relations with the kingdom of Kashmir. Kalhana lays the first scenes of his immortal *Rajatarangini* there. Subsequently, we find frequent references to Gandhara and its Brahmans.<sup>1</sup> It is recorded that Mihirakula the Epthalite Hun king of Kashmir settled thousands of Gandharan Brahmans in Kashmir. He also tells us that the young warriors of Gandhara were in great demand for the army of Kashmir.<sup>2</sup>

“The abundance in which the coins of Indo-Greek, Parthean and Saka kings of north-western India were found till recently in Kashmir points to the existence of considerable commercial intercourse, if not actual political connection, between the Valley and the principalities of Peshawar and Kabul in the last two centuries B.C. and the first century A.D.”<sup>3</sup>

The earliest propagation of Buddhist religion in Kashmir and Gandhara is attributed to the same person—Majjhantika, the great missionary sent by Moggaliputta Tissa, the religious adviser of Ashoka. The kingdom of Kashmir appears in ancient records as a part and parcel of Gandhara. In the list of sixteen Mahajanapadas, the Buddhist texts mention Kashmir-Gandhara as one Janapada, indicating thereby that the two countries formed one political unit in the pre-Ashokan period. During Ashoka's reign Kashmir and Gandhara came close together. Even after the break-up of his vast empire, the connections were maintained, alternately Gandhara becoming the vassal of Kashmir and the Punjab. King Meghavahana of Kashmir was brought from Gandhara by the nobility of Kashmir to rule over the land after the retirement of Samdhimat-Aryaraja.<sup>4</sup> That Kashmir and Gandhara continued to remain one political unit after Ashoka is evidenced by the Greek records in which Kaspapyros is described as a Gandharan city. In the *Milindapanha* which was composed about the beginning of the Christian era, the two countries are compounded as Kashmir-Gandhara. There can also be no doubt that Kalhana's references to the expeditions of Kashmiri kings into the north-west frontier of India are historical facts. We learn from Heun Tsiang that when he visited Taxila, he found the country to be a dependency of Kashmir.

The close connections of the various Kashmiri kings with the Sahi rulers of the Kabul Valley whose capital was at Udbhandapura (modern Und) is amply proved from a study of the *Rajatarangini*.

1 *Rajatarangini* : i-56, 68, 307 : ii-145.

2 R.C. Pandit : *River of Kings*, p. 615.

3 R.C. Kak : *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*, p. 52.

4 See *Raj* : iii-2. Like Meghavahana, Udhyana Deva, who was a refugee in Gandhara, was restored to the throne of Kashmir in the 14th century.



Lalitaditya gave shelter to many young princes of the later Kushan rulers of the Kabul Valley and appointed them to high posts under him. In the later history of Kashmir we learn that the Kashmiri kings entered into matrimonial relations with the Sahi kings of Gandhara. Under Anantdeva (1028-63 A.D.) we find several scions of that house, designated as Sahiputras or Rajaputras, in positions of great honour and power at the Kashmir court.<sup>1</sup> The last independent ruler of this line at Gandhara, Trilocanpala, was aided by the then king of Kashmir, Samgramaraja (1006-28 A.D.) but received a crushing defeat at the hands of Mahmud Ghazni and spent the rest of his days as a refugee in Kashmir. In the 14th century Sultan Sikandar of Kashmir conquered Gandhara and married the princess of Udbhandapura whose son the celebrated Zain-ul-abidin was the Akbar of Kashmir.

With such close political and cultural ties existing between the two kingdoms of Kashmir and Gandhara, it is unimaginable that the Gandharan school of art could have developed independent of the skilled hands of the Kashmirian artists. For thousands of years past, Kashmirian artisans have been famous for the exquisite products of their artistic hands and even now their fame in this respect throughout Asia and Europe has not in any way diminished. If the Greek influences are unmistakably found in the ruins of old temples in Kashmir, the converse must also be true and the art of Gandhara must have been affected by the skill of the Kashmiri sculptor and architect. We find that excepting the unavoidable difference in the material used for the various buildings in Kashmir and Gandhara, the two are architecturally identical. The early Buddhist edifices of Kashmir have practically the same plan and probably had the same elevations as the contemporary Buddhist buildings of Gandhara.<sup>2</sup>

"We have seen," says Dr P.C. Bagchi, "that during the first period of Buddhist expansion outside India, it was the North-West, specially Gandhara and Kashmir which took the leading part. It is, therefore, quite natural that the missionaries of these two countries who went to Central Asia and China would carry with them the elements of the Indo-Greek art which was, in their own country, the only medium of the plastic expression of their pious aspirations."<sup>3</sup>

Mahayana Buddhism was responsible for the development of the Graeco-Buddhist art which found enthusiastic reception at the

1 Compare *Rajatarangini* : vii-144, 178, 274. Among the wives of King Harsa there were Vasantalekha and other Sahi princesses. vii-956, 1470.

2 R.C. Kak : *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*.

3 P.C. Bagchi : *India and China*,

hands of the Chinese. Numerous Buddhist gods and goddesses--Avlokiteswar, Tara, Manjusri, Kwan-Yen, Maitreya--afforded a vast field for the talented sculptors of Kashmir and Gandhara. It profoundly reacted on the plastic art of not only Central Asia and China but on that of distant Japan too.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE IMPERIAL KARKOTAS AND AFTER

WITH THE accession of DURLABHAVARDHANA (625-661 A.D.) to the throne of Kashmir, Kalhana's history assumes an authentic character and gives more detailed and reliable information about the dynasties that ruled from the seventh century A.D. to his own time (1149 A.D.). From here onwards we can check the majority of the recorded royal names from coins or foreign notices, and the chronology too becomes, within certain limits, reliable.

Durlabhavardhana's coins bearing the name of *Durlabhadeva* and showing a type of bold but rude execution which characterises all the known issues of rulers of this dynasty, have been found in the Valley. We have possibly a reference to him in the Chinese Annals which mention Tu-lo-pa as a king of India, who controlled the route from China to Ki-pin (Kabul Valley) between 627-49 A.D.

It is probable that Heun Tsiang visited the Valley during his rule. We have already noted the hospitable reception that the Chinese scholar received from the king. From his accounts it appears that the founder of the dynasty had already set out on a policy of expanding the territories of his kingdom, for Taxila east of the Indus, Urusha or Hazara, Simhapura or the Salt Range with the smaller states of Rajapuri (Rajauri) and Paranotsa (Poonch) had no independent rulers but were tributary to Kashmir. Of Taxila, particularly, we are told that it had been subjugated at a recent date.<sup>1</sup> Heun Tsiang found all adjacent territories on the west and south of the Valley down to the plains, subject to the sway of the king of Kashmir.

Beyond this Heun Tsiang's account does not contain any reference to the political condition of the kingdom. But a closer study reveals that peace and prosperity prevailed and though Buddhism claimed a large number of adherents and the king was well-inclined towards the Buddhist priests, it was not the dominant faith. The building of temples of Brahmanical denomination had already started and these were "the sole thought of the people" then.

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1 That the power of the ruler of Kashmir actually extended to Taksasila (Taxila) and the Indus is proved by the fact that he personally came to visit Heun Tsiang when the latter, on his return journey, was stopping with the King of Kapisa, or Kabul, at Udbhandapura (Waihand, Und) on the Indus ; see *Life*, p. 192.



This is corroborated by the *Rajatarangini* which mentions the building of temples by the queen and the princes as also grant, by the king, of villages to Brahmans in the southern districts of the Valley.

Durlabhavardhana ruled, according to Kalhana, for thirty-six years. The chronology of the Karkota dynasty is, however, a subject of much controversy. Kalhana's dates are given in the Laukika era which can exactly be worked out with reference to the Christian era. Kalhana, however, does not give the date of accession of the kings of this dynasty, but only the length of their reigns. We have therefore to calculate the dates of accession backwards from Cippatajayapida, a later Karkota king, whose death is recorded to have occurred in the Laukika year 3889 or 813 A.D. Calculating backwards from this date, Durlabhavardhana's accession would have taken place in 600 A.D.

The chronology of the Karkota dynasty would thus be :

Durlabhavardhana, 600-636, Pratapaditya II, 636-686, Candrapida, 686-694, Tarapida, 694-699, Muktapida, 699-736, Kuvalyapida 736-737, Vajraditya, 737-744, Prithvyapida, 744-748 Samgramapida, 748, Jajja, 748-751, Jayapida, 751-782, Lalitapida, 782-794, Samgramapida II, 794-801, Cippatajayapida, 801-813, Ajitapida, 813-850, Anangapida, 850-853, Utpalapida, 853-855.

This chronology of the Karkotas could perhaps be accepted at least for working purposes, but it is seriously contradicted by the entries in Chinese Annals of the T'ang dynasty. We find a discrepancy of at least twenty-five years and hence Dr Stein has come to the conclusion that the dates of the rulers of this dynasty should be advanced by a similar number of years.

This, however, leads to another difficulty, as then the rule of the dynasty would be dragged down to 880 A.D. when we know for certain that Avantivarman was ruling in Kashmir. The only explanation would, therefore, be that Kalhana has given a longer reign to some kings of this dynasty ; and hence the problem.<sup>1</sup>

After Durlabhavardhana's death, his son, PRATAPADITYA II (661-711 A.D.) ascended the throne. His coins bear the legend *Sri-Pratapa*. The fact that several coins of this type were found in the Banda District of U.P. and other places in India, shows the political and economic relations that Kashmir had developed under the Karkotas with the kingdoms in these parts of India.

Pratapaditya founded a new town of Pratapapura, present Tapar, 18 miles to the west of Srinagar. Recent excavations at this place

1 For a detailed discussion on Karkota chronology see S.P. Pandit's *Introduction to Gaudavaho*, Bombay Sanskrit Series, 1888.

have revealed the foundations of large temples and buildings.

Apart from the mention of the founding of this town, Kalhana only relates of Pratapaditya the romantic episode of his marriage with Narendraprabha, previously the wife of a rich merchant from Rohtak, named Nona, who was settled in Kashmir. Narendraprabha bore the king three sons, Candrapida, Tarapida, and Muktapida, who were also known by the names of Vajraditya, Udayaditya, and Lalitaditya.

CANDRAPIDA (711-719 A.D.), his eldest son, succeeded Pratapaditya. He is mentioned in the Chinese Annals as ruling over Kashmir in A.D. 713, and was powerful enough to be recognised as king by the Chinese emperor in 719-20 A.D.

We learn from the Annals of the T'ang dynasty that king Tchen-lo-pi-li of Kashmir whose identity with Candrapida has been recognised by Klaproth, sent in A.D. 713, an embassy to the Chinese court to invoke its aid against the Arabs who were threatening his territories far to the north. A similar request had previously been made by the king of Khokand for aid against the Tibetans and Arabs who were advancing to attack him. The Emperor had sent an army to his succour and the aggressors had been completely defeated. We do not know how Candrapida's request was answered but it is learnt that about the year 720 he was at his request granted the title of King on the Imperial Roll.<sup>1</sup>

Candrapida was renowned for his piety and justice. Kalhana records that when the king began to build a temple, a leather-tanner refused to give up his hut which lay on the site. When the matter was reported to the king, he considered his own officers to be at fault, not the tanner. "Stop the building", he cried out, "or have it erected elsewhere." The tanner came himself to the king and represented that since his birth the hut had been to him like a mother, a witness of good and evil days, and he could not bear to see it pulled down. Still he agreed to part with it, provided the king himself came to his hut and asked "for it in accordance with propriety." The king agreed and went to the tanner's hut and there bought it up from the owner.

The reign of this king was full of just acts like this, and he may almost be said to have fallen a martyr to them. Once he punished a Brahman who had secretly murdered another Brahman by means of witchcraft. The former felt deep wrath over his punishment and was

1 It was, however, between 736-47 A.D. that the Chinese Emperor Yuen-Tsung (713-56 A.D.) an enlightened prince, directly brought his victorious armies on to the soil of the territories of the Kashmir king. His army came via Kashghar, captured Gilgit and occupied Baltistan.

instigated by the king's younger brother, Tarapida, to use his witchcraft against the king. When the king was on his death-bed, the Brahman's witchcraft became known but the king forgave him, saying that he was only a tool in the hands of his ambitious brother.<sup>1</sup> Thus died the noble king Candrapida after a reign of eight years and a half.

The *Rajatarangini* mentions the founding of temples by his queen, Prakashadevi and by his *guru* Mihiradatta as well as by his minister Calitaka.

TARAPIDA (619-624 A.D.) then ascended the throne. His inglorious rule of four years was full of cruel and bloody deeds. Cities and towns were deserted by the oppressed inhabitants who fled to forests and hills to escape the rapacious deeds of the king and his minions.

#### LALITADITYA (724-761 A.D.)

LALITADITYA, the third son of Pratapaditya II who now ascended the throne, is chiefly known to history as a great conqueror. His reign of thirty-seven years was marked by exploits of conquest and many expeditions, for he was essentially a tireless warrior and a great conqueror. Like Alexander the Great, Lalitaditya had a desire for world-conquest which could not be allayed, and Kalhana thus lays bare the king's ambitious mind in his own words :

"For rivers which have set out from their own region the ocean is the limit but nowhere is there a limit for those who are frankly aspiring to be conquerors."

Lalitaditya gave wide extent to his dominions. The Punjab, Kanauj, Tibet, Badakshan and other territories are said to have been brought into subjection by him. His attitude towards the subjugated kings and peoples was magnanimous and munificent ; and, though his prolonged wars of conquest, like those of Alexander, at times damped the enthusiasm of his war-weary soldiers, this brave general had the knack of enkindling it again. In this regard Kalhana writes :

"Though disliked by the Generals who were uneasy at the prolonged duration of the war the king thought highly of his demand of strict observance of forms !"

Lalitaditya ushered in an era of glory and prosperity for the kingdom. He was tolerant towards all schools of religious thought. Buddhism and Brahmanism, the two prominent creeds of the time,

1 Marco Polo records the practice of witchcraft and sorcery as being common in Kashmir. "They have", he says, "an astonishing acquaintance with the devilries of enchantment".—See Yule, *Marco Polo*, i. p. 175.



received patronage at the hands of this ruler who constructed temples for the Buddha as well as for Siva, Vishnu and other gods. The king liberally patronised men of letters, and several *viharas*, where learning flourished a good deal, were set up. Kashmir became the synagogue of foreign scholars and erudites, and many cultural missions sent from other countries were received with respect.

During his reign public services were re-organised and new buildings were constructed. Irrigational facilities were afforded to the cultivators and relief measures were adopted in times of unforeseen calamity. Charitable institutions, where the poor and the needy were fed every day were also set up. Many towns were founded during his long reign and he built the world famous Martand Temple. This and the few remnants of the ruins in Parihaspura testify to the splendour and massiveness with which the age moved. The kingdom was indeed at the zenith of its glory.

Before giving any detailed account of Lalitaditya's various expeditions it would be better to know the political set-up of the times and the influence upon it of the conditions prevailing beyond the frontiers of the kingdom of Kashmir.

In the South Asia of the early eighth century the times were out of joint. In northern India the Gupta empire and civilization, which three centuries earlier was at its zenith, was in its decline. As in the late Roman Empire, one ambitious general after another tried to unite the smaller kingdoms, but their rule did not last long and none was able to establish any real authority. In the Deccan the Pallava empire was fading out and that of Calukyas of Badami dying of military exhaustion. The later powers, the Gurjara-Pratiharas, the Rashtrakutas, the Palas of Bengal, had not yet emerged.

In the west the Sasanian empire had collapsed in A.D. 637-42, but its Muslim conquerors had just reached Sind (A.D. 712) and not yet penetrated the Afghan mountains and the Punjab.

In the north the Chinese under the T'angs had slowly but gradually extended their dominions to the west and at about Durlabhavardhana's time the Chinese Emperor Tai-Tsung had conquered Kucha, Khotan, Khorasan and Kashghar. But the Emperors had lost control over the provinces and the moment of the break up of the empire was near.<sup>1</sup>

Towards the south, Kashmir territories were in close proximity to the kingdom of Kanauj, which under Harsavardana had acquired extensive territories and fame. During Lalitaditya's reign Kanauj was

1 R. Grousset, *China*.

ruled by Yasovarman who, though having gained several victories over kingdoms to the south and east of Kanauj, could not compete with the power and resources of the Karkotas.

In this vacuum Lalitaditya built up his ephemeral empire. The *Rajatarangini* is silent about his early life, but it can easily be concluded that being the youngest of the three sons of King Pratapaditya II, he must have undergone a thorough schooling in the art of state-craft under his father and his two brothers. He had already seen a great contrasting rule of his immediate predecessor and it must have brought home to him the lesson of such a suicidal policy for both the king and the people.

He was no doubt the scion of an energetic warlike dynasty, but without the Chinese political and military advice and military technique, then far superior to those of their neighbours, his extraordinary career might perhaps not have been possible. It seems that his army was mainly recruited from the north and most of his generals, including his commander-in-chief, Cankunya, also came from the same region. It appears that due to the decline of the T'ang rule, the Kashmir ruler attracted many an adventurer and Lalitaditya was not slow in taking advantage of their experience and martial abilities. For instance, it is clear that Cankunya must have acquired fame as a military commander even before he joined the services of Lalitaditya since he bore the Chinese title of Can-kiun—General.

The political condition of north-western India at that time seems to have been too obscure to permit a guess now as to the circumstances which would account for hostilities between the rulers of Kashmir and distant Kanauj. However, it can easily be presumed that Lalitaditya had already under him the territories comprising the districts of Kangra and the province of the Punjab. When Lalitaditya led his great army across the fertile plains of the Punjab, it is recorded that the entire population submitted to his rule gladly and without any resistance. Yasovarman at first submitted peacefully but during the drafting of the final treaty a hitch was created when hostilities were resumed and he was dethroned and the whole territory brought under the direct rule of the Kashmir king.

By that victory Lalitaditya not only made himself master of Kanauj, but also acquired the theoretical right of suzerainty over the vast conquests of Yasovarman. In order to effectively assert these rights, Lalitaditya marched towards the east attacking king Jivitagupta of Bihar and West Bengal (Gauda) and reducing him to vassalage, advanced up to the sea coast of Orissa.

At this moment (*cir.* A.D. 735-36) a call for help reached Lalitaditya from the Deccan. Indra I Rashtrakuta had abducted the Calukya princess Bhavagana from Khaira (Gujarat) and forced her to marry him. After his death in 735 A.D., the "Ratta queen" was soon in difficulties. With her secret connivance Lalitaditya crossed the passes into the Deccan without resistance, found the Calukyas friendly allies and overran the Rashtrakuta territories. Karka II (Kakka, Kayya) of Lata (Southern Gujarat) was brought to Kashmir. On his way home Lalitaditya passed through Gujarat, Kathiawar, Malwa and Marwar, shaking the tottering power of the Maitrakas of Valabhi and of the Mauryas of Chitorgarh.<sup>1</sup>

These extensive conquests made the kingdom of Kashmir, for the time being, the most powerful empire that India had seen since the days of the Guptas.<sup>2</sup>

After gaining these outstanding victories in the south, Lalitaditya turned his attention to the territories bordering on the north of Kashmir. As mentioned, his kingdom extended to the farthest point in the Karakoram range controlling the overland caravan routes from India to China. We know that Arab invasion was threatening the Kabul Valley already from the commencement of the eighth century and that simultaneously the Muhammadan power in Sind was making efforts to advance northwards.<sup>3</sup> While the Sahi rule in Kabul and Gandhara was exposed to these attacks, Lalitaditya may well have found an opportunity to extend his authority in the direction of the Indus. He led a victorious army through the Dard Desha (Dardistan) to the Tukhara country (Tukharistan of the later historians). The whole region was then thoroughly imbued with the Kashmiri traditions and learning, thanks to the efforts of the numerous Kashmiri monks and the Kashmiri settlements in the various Central Asian cities. It cannot therefore be difficult to understand that the Kashmir armies under Lalitaditya gained an easy victory there. The Chinese Empire under which they had come, was falling to pieces due to the end of the Ta'ng rule and the internal civil wars and dissensions.

At about this time, there is evidence to show, the Tibetans had acquired sufficient power to be capable of aggression towards the west

1 H. Goetz, 'Sun Temple of Martand', *Art and Letters*, Vol. xxvii, No. 1. For a detailed analysis of the events see his paper on the Conquest of Western India by Lalitaditya—Muktapida of Kashmir' in the *Journal of the Bombay Branch of the Royal Asiatic Society*, Vol. 27, 1951.

2 R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, p. 383.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 381.



and the east. Lalitaditya therefore turned his forces against the Tibetans in Ladakh and beyond. Ladakh was easily brought under subjugation and many victories were also gained against the Tibetans. These victories were celebrated not only during the time of Lalitaditya but even long afterwards. Kalhana records that in his time the victories were annually celebrated and Alberuni mentions that the Kashmiris observed the second of Caitra as a day of Lalitaditya's victory over the Tibetans.<sup>1</sup>

It was due to his intention to completely subjugate the Tibetans that Lalitaditya sent his famous embassy to the Chinese court. The Chinese Annals mention that U-li-to the ambassador of Mo-to-pi (Muktapida) the king of Kashmir, came to the Chinese court to seek aid from the Emperor against the common enemy, the Tibetans. That Lalitaditya should have endeavoured to enlist the friendship of the powerful Chinese king Yuen Tsun is natural enough seeing that the Tibetan expansion threatened the Chinese kingdom too. U-li-to requested an alliance between the Chinese Emperor and Lalitaditya against the Tibetans and the despatch of a Chinese auxiliary force which was to encamp in the midst of his country on the shores of the Mahapadma lake (the Wular). He offered to find provisions for an army of 200,000 men and reported that in alliance with the king of Central India he had blocked all the five routes to Tibet. The Kashmirian envoy mentioned also the great success his king had achieved against the Tibetans in all his previous campaigns. But apart from receiving the embassy in a very courteous and hospitable manner the Chinese Emperor does not seem to have found his way to accepting the proposal, perhaps due to the fact that the Emperor was himself involved in quelling a rebellion raised by General Gan Lah-Shan, an officer of Turkish descent, in consequence of which he had ultimately to flee from his capital.

Lalitaditya had therefore to undertake the subjugation of the Tibetans all alone. The *Rajatarangini* mentions a few expeditions, but apart from the definite conclusion that Ladakh and some western provinces of Tibet were brought under the sway of the Kashmir king, the complete overthrow of the Tibetans is rather doubtful. But the adventurous spirit of Lalitaditya always led him into new countries and tight situations. Once he was lured into the sand deserts of Central Asia by the wily king of that country and finding his army without water for a number of days was about to perish when accidentally a spring of fresh water was discovered which not only gave a new lease of life to him

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1 *Rajatarangini*, iv-168.

and his followers, but fanned his vindictive desire to punish the king.<sup>1</sup>

Lalitaditya, not being satisfied with his conquests, set out on new expeditions and in one of them lost his life. Kalhana mentions two legends about his death which were current in his own time. Both of them agree in connecting it with a distant expedition on the north. According to one version Lalitaditya perished through excessive snow in a country called Aryanaka (modern Afghanistan). Another version made him end his life by suicide in order to escape being captured when separated from his army and blocked on a difficult mountain route.

The military exploits of Lalitaditya have naturally received greater prominence in the various accounts of his reign and have made him a hero to the Kashmiris of later periods. But his great works of architecture and public good and his intense love of learning, patronage of scholars and his great virtues as a humane conqueror are some of the qualities which should have, independent of his conquests, ranked him among the greatest kings of Kashmir.

The Valley had been till then subjected to constant floods due to the silting up of the bed of the river at Baramula and Lalitaditya was the first king to realise that by clearing the bed of rocks and silt, the flow of water would be accelerated and thus the water level would fall in other parts of the Valley. He was thus the forerunner of the great engineer of Avantivarman, Suyya. Lalitaditya got the passage cleared and thus vast areas of swamps were reclaimed for purposes of cultivation. Similarly he raised bunds round low-lying lands making them fit for growing crops. He also built numerous irrigation canals and Kalhana mentions that he erected water-wheels for lifting water to the Cakradara and other *karewas* for irrigation purposes. The cumulative effect of these works was that the production of crops increased adding greatly to the well-being and prosperity of the people.

Lalitaditya and his queens founded numerous towns. He built the towns of Suniscatapur and Darpitapur in commemoration of his foreign expeditions. There are, however, no traces of these towns extant now. He also built the two towns of Phalapura and Parontsa. The former may now be traced to a village near Shadipur and the latter is the town now called Poonch, the capital of the *illaga* of the same name. He is also credited with the founding of the town of Lalitpura (modern Letapur) at which place he built a large temple. At Hushkapura (modern Ushkur), he is said to have built a big *vihara* and a Buddhist

1 Notwithstanding its half-legendary elaboration, the story of the expedition across the 'sand ocean' is completely corroborated by the experiences of Sven Hedin and other modern explorers.

temple. It may be mentioned that this *vihara* served as the resting place of a later Chinese traveller Ou-kong who has given a grand picture of it. Lalitaditya is also recorded to have founded a town at Lokpunya (modern Lokabhavan on the Anantnag-Verinag road). This town gained great importance as the headquarters of a group of feudal landlords (Damaras) in the later history of Kashmir. But the two outstanding constructions of Lalitaditya which have made his name immortal and added a lustre to the artistic and architectural abilities of Kashmiris are the temple of Martand and the city of Parihaspura.

"It is no longer possible," says Stein, "to trace with certainty the cities and remains of all the towns and structures which owed their existence to Lalitaditya. But those among them which can be identified justify by their extant ruins the great fame which Lalitaditya enjoyed as a builder. The ruins of the splendid temple of Martand which the king had constructed near the Tirtha of the same name, are still the most striking object of ancient Hindu architecture in the Valley. Even in their present state of decay they command admiration both by their imposing dimensions and by the beauty of their architectural design and decoration."<sup>1</sup>

Among the great architectural specimens of the world, Martand occupies a very high place. It is not only typical of Kashmir architecture at its best but is

"built on the most sublime site occupied by any building in the world—finer far than the site of the Parthenon, or of the Taj, or of St. Peters, or of the Escorial—we may take it as the representative or rather the culmination of all the rest and by it we must judge the Kashmir people at their best.

"On a perfectly open and even plain," continues Young-husband, "gently sloping away from a background of snowy mountains looking directly out on the entire length both of the smiling Kashmir Valley and of the snowy ranges which bound it—so situated in fact as to be encircled, yet not over-whelmed by, snowy mountains—stand the ruins of a temple second only to the Egyptians in massiveness and strength and to the Greek in elegance and grace. It is built of immense rectilinear blocks of limestone, betraying strength and durability. Its outline and details are bold, simple and impressive. And any overweighing sense of massiveness is relieved by the elegance of the surrounding colonnade of graceful Greeklike pillars. It is but a ruin now, but yet, with the other ruins so numerous in the Valley and similar in

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1 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 609.



their main characteristics, it denotes the former presence in Kashmir of a people worthy of study. No one without an eye for natural beauty would have chosen that special site for the construction of a temple and no one with an inclination to the ephemeral and transient would have built it on so massive and enduring a scale.”<sup>1</sup>

The temple of Martand set the model for Kashmiri Hindu art in all the following centuries. Thus Lalitaditya must be regarded as the founder not only of a short-lived empire, but also of six centuries of Kashmiri Hindu art.<sup>2</sup>

An even more impressive proof of the grand scale on which Lalitaditya's building operations were conducted, is afforded by the remains marking the site of the city of Parihaspura near the present Shadipur. It is a *karewa* just opposite the junction of the Sindh river with the Jhelum, high and dry above all floods and marshes. And it stands well away from the mountain ranges on either hand, right out in the centre of the Valley so that all the higher peaks and the complete circle of snowy mountains may be seen. A nobler site could not be found and the few ruins found there in 1892 by Stein are an ample proof of the massive nature of the great buildings that must have existed there. “Kalhana describes at length the series of great temples built by the king at this town. The extensive, though much injured, ruins with which I was able to identify these structures at the site of Parihaspura the present Paraspur, show sufficiently that Kalhana's account of their magnificence was not exaggerated.”<sup>3</sup>

After the reign of Lalitaditya, Parihaspura passed through many vicissitudes which explains the utter decay of the ruins therein. His son Vajraditya removed the royal residence from there and later the drainage operations of Suyya brought the confluence of the Vitasta and Sindhu from Prihaspura to Shadipur which naturally affected the importance of the town. Sankarvarman (883-901) used the materials of Parihaspura for building his new town at Pattan and Harsa (1089-1101) seized and melted some of the gold and silver images of the temples still existing therein. In the subsequent civil wars the whole town was burned down.

Lalitaditya's greatness is depicted by his extreme sense of toleration to the religious beliefs of his subjects, and his generosity towards the peoples and kings subjugated by him. Although a follower of the Hindu religion he showed equal respect to the Buddhists and founded

1 Younghusband, *Kashmir* p. 201

2 H. Goetz, *Op. Cit.* p. 8.

3 Stein, trans of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 300.

many Buddhist monasteries and temples. His commander-in-chief was a Buddhist and so were many of the high officials. To talented persons of all nationalities he showed great respect and regard and being a patron of learning many of the famous learned men of India and other countries came to his court. He brought from Kanauj the two famous poets Bhavabhuti and Vakpatiraja after Yasovarman's defeat and gave them the honour and respect due to them by installing them in his capital in Kashmir. Kalhana, however, does not conceal the king's faults. He mentions that he often used to give foolish orders when under the influence of drink, *e.g.* his order to burn down the city of Pravara-sena which luckily was not carried out by his wise ministers. The second was more serious. He summoned the king of Gauda (Bengal) to Kashmir and promised him safe conduct, making the image of Vishnu Parihasakesva the surety for his promise. All the same he had the king killed by assassins. It is difficult to find any motive for this foul treachery as to condone it in any way. The sequence of this event is interesting. Hearing of their king's death in Kashmir, a band of infuriated Bengali youth went there to avenge this crime and attacked the temple of Parihasakesva. While they were being cut down by the Kashmir soldiers they broke open the door of the temple and mistaking another image for that of Parihasakesva, broke it into pieces. Kalhana pays a just tribute to their heroism.

Before his disappearance from the scene, Lalitaditya is supposed to have given the maxims of policy for the guidance of his successors.

These are rather curious when viewed from modern canons of justice and sound polity, but they illustrate the principles of political wisdom which influenced the Kashmir administration in Kalhana's own time and for long after.

Lalitaditya was followed by a succession of weak kings who were unable to maintain the power and prestige of the dynasty. Short reigns and disputed successions, civil war and fantastic, aimless expeditions, such as those of king Jayapida, debauchery and extravagance, soon reduced the dynasty to a mere shadow.

KUVALYAPIDA, his elder son, born of the queen Kamladevi, was a pious king who, disgusted with petty intrigues of his ministers, gave up the throne and after leading a life of renunciation and piety in India, is said to have obtained supernatural perfection (*siddhi*).

Kuvalyapida's brother, VAJRADITYA, also named BAPPIYAKA, who was born of Cakramardika, another queen of Lalitaditya, now ascended the throne. A tyrant and a debauchee, he passed his days in the company of a large number of women of his seraglio. The wealth and

costly articles with which his father had equipped the temples at Parihaspura, his capital, were taken away and squandered by him. For seven weary years he led his sensuous life when he succumbed to consumption brought on by his excesses.

The sufferings of the people did not end even with the death of Vajraditya. His eldest son and successor, PRITHIVYAPIDA, was equally a tyrant. After four years and one month of his oppressive rule he was dethroned by his rebellious younger brother, SAMGRAMAPIDA whose reign lasted for only seven days, during which there was nothing but strife with his younger brother Jayapida.

#### JAYAPIDA *alias* VINAYADITYA

There is happily a break in the annals of tyranny. JAYAPIDA, the youngest son of Vajraditya, was a good and just ruler and tried to equal his grandfather, Lalitaditya, in glory. After restoring order and setting up an able administration he marched with "eighty thousand litters" and a large number of horses on an expedition of conquest.

The long and detailed narrative which Kalhana devotes to his conquering missions, shows him to be almost as great a hero as Lalitaditya. We certainly have a number of coins of the mixed-metal type of the Karkota dynasty bearing his other name of VINAYADITYA, but there is no contemporary evidence of his having achieved the vast conquests as detailed by the poet-historian.

What Kalhana relates of the early part of his campaign is that he subjugated all the kingdoms of northern India up to Prayaga (Allahabad), where he gave in charity ten thousand horses to the priests, enjoining upon them to put his seal on the pots of the Ganges water taken by pilgrims from there to their home. This, he vainly believed, would over-awe the rulers of other kingdoms who would automatically become his vassals.

He then left his army in charge of his minister Devasarman and went on an incognito adventure to Bengal where on his way he married the daughter of a prince Jayanta who was struck by his prowess and valour when single-handed he killed a lion. Both he and Jayanta then led an army to the neighbouring territories and subjugated them.

On his return Jayapida defeated and dethroned the king of Kanauj, Vajrayudha.<sup>1</sup> But on reaching Kashmir he found that during the absence of three years from his kingdom, the throne had been usurped by his brother-in-law, Jajja. Jayapida defeated him in a battle fought

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<sup>1</sup> Smith, *Early History of India*, p. 307.



at Sukseletra where Jajja was killed by a stone flung on to his face with a sling by a Candala soldier of Jayapida.

Jayapida's building activities deserve a mention. He built a city named Jayapura towards the Wular lake and marked now by the village of Andarkot. He built a strong fort there and with the marshy ground all around it, this fort was said to be impregnable. In the later history of the Valley, Jayapura with its fort was the scene of several important battles.

Kalhana mentions the founding of two more towns by Jayapida—one near his Jayapura named Dvarvati, and another at Malhanpur, present Malur on the left bank of the Jhelum, six miles below Srinagar. Kalyandevi and Kamladevi, his two queens, founded the towns of Kalyanapura, present Kalampur, and Kamlapura respectively. One of his ministers, Jayadatta, built a *matha* at Jayapura.

The king was a great patron of art and letters. He brought learned men from abroad and restored the study of the *Mahabhashya* which had fallen into neglect in Kashmir. He himself studied grammar from a learned man named Kshira. His chief pandit was the great scholar Bhatta Udbhatta, whom he used to give one lakh of *dinaras* daily. He appointed the poet Damodargupta, the author of the poem *Kuttanimata* as his chief councillor. Manoratha, Sankhadanta, Cataka and Samdhimat, the famous poets and authors, flourished at his court. Among his ministers was Vamana, one of the two authors of the *Kashikavrtti*, the famous commentary on Panini's grammar. A learned man, Thakkiya by name, though of a low position was elevated and patronised by Jayapida, for his learning. Some of them are known to us from their works and other references.

Of Jayapida's subsequent reign, which according to Kalhana's calculation, would have to be placed in the years A.D. 751-782, but which in all probability fell much closer to the end of the eighth century, few authentic details have been given in the *Rajatarangini*. We are told that he led an army against a king of the "eastern region", Bhimasen, who imprisoned him, but from whose captivity he managed to escape through a clever stratagem. He is then supposed to have attacked the king of Nepal, Aramudi, but due to a flood in one of the rivers there, he was carried down the current and captured by his adversary who imprisoned him in a strongly built fort. From there he escaped through the loyalty of his minister, Devasarman, who killed himself to enable his master to jump into the river from the fort and cross over to the other bank on his corpse, where his army was waiting to receive him. Neither Bhimasen nor Aramudi can, however, be traced as historical persons, but taking into account the chaotic conditions

prevailing in northern India then, his incursion into these territories is not wholly improbable.

All these expeditions naturally resulted in putting a great strain on the slender resources of Jayapida, more so because they do not seem to have yielded as much loot and tribute as he had expected. The story of the Naga deity of the Wular lake directing him to a copper mine nearby shows the king's anxiety to secure funds for running the administration and paying his army. No wonder that towards the end of his rule, he suddenly turned into a tyrant and began to squeeze his subjects of what they possessed. In this he was assisted by his financial adviser named Sivadasa. For three successive years, he appropriated to himself the whole of the produce including the cultivator's share. Rapine and slaughter were the order of the day. Miserable was the condition of the people, slaughtered and plundered as they were by him who ought to have been their protector. The Brahmans who were his particular victims emigrated in large numbers and those who remained, perished. Some satirical verses which Kalhana quotes as illustrating the changed sentiments of the Brahmans towards the king may well be genuine productions of the period. Ultimately, after numerous Brahmans had sought death by voluntary starvation (*prayopavesa*) Jayapida fell a victim to divine vengeance. Kalhana describes with a good deal of dramatic force the final scene when the Brahmans of Tulamul cursed the king for his arrogance and tyranny and all of a sudden a golden pole of the canopy tumbled down and struck the king who sustained a serious injury which ended his life.

Jayapida's son, LALITAPIDA born of queen Durga, now ascended the throne. Addicted to conviviality, he squandered the wealth amassed by his father. He, however, made amends for his father's persecution of Brahmans by restoring to them the *agraharas* or land-grants, and endowed new ones at several places in the Valley. His uneventful rule extending over twelve years came to an end with his death. Similar was the rule for seven years of his brother, SAMGRAMAPIDA II, also known by the name of PRITHIVYAPIDA, born of Jayapida's second queen, Kalyanadevi.

After Samgramapida II came CIPPATAJAYAPIDA, the minor son of Lalitapida, born of his wife Jayadevi. She was the daughter of a spirit distiller, and being a pretty girl, had been taken as a concubine by Lalitapida. Cippatajayapida was guided in his young age by his maternal uncles, named Utpala, Padma, Kalyana, Mamma and Dharma. His eldest uncle Utpala held five chief offices of the State and his brothers usurped the remaining ones.

What remained of Jayapida's wealth, most of which had already been squandered away by his son Lalitapida, fell into the hands of these brothers. They conspired together when their nephew and lord was gradually emerging from childhood and got him killed, lest he assume the powers exercised by them.

Having disposed of this puppet king after a nominal rule of twelve years, his maternal uncles grew jealous of one another and hence none of them could secure the throne. Each, however, struggled to put up the person of his choice as the nominal ruler.

Tribhuvanapida was the eldest son of Vajraditya but being a simple man and free from intrigue, his claim to the throne had been bypassed. He had a son named AJITAPIDA, and Utpala set him up as king. Ajitapida was, however, a convenient tool in the hands of Utpala and his brothers. They provided him with only food and clothing and appropriated to themselves the entire revenue of the kingdom.

The extent of the plunder of public monies by these rapacious men can be estimated by the large number of temples they built and the endowments they created. Utpala built the temple of Utpalasvamin and founded the town of Utpalapura, present Kakapur. Padma erected the temple of Padmasvamin and founded the town of Padmapura, present Pampur. Padma's wife built one *matha* in the capital city and another at Vijyeshwara. Kalyana founded the temple of Kalyanasvamin and Mamma of Mammassvamin. Mamma could afford, it is said, to give in charity 85,009 cows, each provided with 5,000 *dinaras* in outfit on the occasion of the consecration of this temple. They virtually ruled the country for thirty-six years and nine months, after which there developed jealousy and open hostility between Mamma and Utpala, resulting after much bloodshed in the discomfiture of Utpala, and the overthrow of his puppet king Ajitapida.

Mamma now replaced him by ANANGAPIDA, son of Samgramapida II. Anangapida stayed on the throne for only three years, when Sukhavarman, the enterprising son of Utpala, bent upon avenging the death of his father, collected a large number of followers and defeated Mamma's forces. Anangapida was dethroned and replaced by UTPALAPIDA, son of Ajitapida, and a man of Mamma's choice. Then followed a process of quick accessions and dethronements of a number of puppet kings resulting in utter chaos in the kingdom. The ministers and officials changing in rapid succession, engaged themselves in appropriating State revenues and tyrannising over the unfortunate people. Even the territories adjoining the Valley were lost, the governors and the administrators there declaring themselves independent.



Sukhavarman was meanwhile killed by one of his own relations named Suska. Thereupon Sura, the wise and able prime minister who was dominating the scene supported the direct accession of Sukhavarman's son, Avantivarman, to the throne of Kashmir, thus establishing the rule of the line of kings of the Utpala dynasty.

### AVANTIVARMAN

With the accession of AVANTIVARMAN (855-83 A.D.) we reach that period of Kashmir history for which Kalhana's work presents us with a truly historical record. The use of contemporary accounts from the commencement of his reign onwards becomes evident, not only from the generally sober and matter-of-fact narrative but also from the use of exact dates.

Avantivarman's reign appears to have brought a period of consolidation and prosperity for the kingdom which had suffered considerably from internal troubles during the preceding reigns. He did not indulge in vainglorious expeditions outside the Valley which had sapped the resources of the kingdom in Jayapida's reign. Nor is there mention of his even attempting to regain control over the territories adjacent to his kingdom. It was certainly a wise policy. The peace and prosperity which it ensured raised Kashmir during his reign to great heights in the realms of philosophy, art and letters.

So unselfish and affectionate was he that notwithstanding his having a son of his own, he installed his step-brother, Suravarman, to the position of Yuvraj or heir-apparent. His prime minister, Sura, was a wise administrator who was guided in his duties by a verse in Sanskrit, meaning :

"This is the time to do good, while fortune, fickle by nature, is present. How can there be again time for doing good since misfortune is always imminent."

Kalhana's mention of the numerous temples built and towns founded by the king and his court, throws light on the affluent circumstances of the people. Sura built a temple of Siva and His consort at Sureshvariksetra at Ishabar, on the eastern bank of the Dal Lake and also a *matha* calling it, after his own name, Suramatha. He founded the town of Surapura (Hurapor near Shopyan) locating therein the watch station which was formerly high up on the Pir Panjal pass. His wife and sons followed his example and built several temples and *mathas*.

Foremost among the foundations of Avantivarman is the town of Avantipura at the site called Vivaikasara on the right bank of the

Vitasta, seventeen miles from Srinagar on the Srinagar-Jammu highway. He had built here the shrine of Vishnu Avantisvamin before his accession to the throne and, after obtaining the sovereignty, he constructed the temple of Siva Avanteshvara. Their ruins, though not equal in size to Lalitaditya's structures, yet rank among the most imposing monuments of ancient Kashmir architecture and sufficiently attest the resources of their builder. He had pedestals with silver conduits made at the shrines of Tripureshvara, Bhutesha and Vijayesha.

Cordial relations subsisted between the king and his prime minister. The king had respect for his minister who was devoted to his master. The minister was always anticipating the king's wishes and without speaking to him, was meeting them quickly and at any cost. Once Avantivarman went to worship at Bhutesha and noticed on the base of the god's image some *utpala-shakha* (a wild growing vegetable called by the Kashmiris *upal-hak*) which the priests had placed there as an offering. The king inquired the reason for such a poor offering and the priests told him that a Damara, Dhanava by name, who was a friend of the minister Sura, had taken away the villages belonging to the shrine and hence they could afford to make no offering better than this to the god. This displeased the king but out of regard for the minister, he did not express his displeasure, and left the worship, feigning indisposition. The minister perceived the true cause of the king's abrupt retirement from the worship and at once summoning Dhanava to his presence, cut off his head. The king's anger was thereupon appeased and when the minister inquired after his health, the king said he was well and resumed his worship.<sup>1</sup>

Fully in keeping with the conditions which Kalhana's narrative indicates for the peaceful and just reign of Avantivarman, are the references to the liberal patronage which scholars and poets enjoyed at his court. Among those who are particularly mentioned are Bhatta Kallata, the pupil of Vasagupta, the founder of the Spandasastra branch of Kashmir Saiva philosophy, Kavi Ratnakara and Anandavardhana. Their extant works occupy a prominent position in the Sanskrit literature of old Kashmir.

Kashmir was liable to floods owing to which it yielded little produce. Lalitaditya had, with great exertions, drained out some water from the Valley after which it produced to some extent, better crops.

1 Here we have the first glimpse of a Damara lord who had grown rich and haughty after laying his hands on temple property. The disturbed conditions prevailing during the rule of the later Karkotas, seem to have given rise to a class of rich landlords who later on played an important and dominant role in Kashmir politics.

After him, however, the drainage operations had been neglected with the result that floods were devastating the country as frequently as ever. The price of grain had consequently gone up, one *kharwar* (192 lb) of paddy selling at 1050 *dinaras* in famine-stricken areas. Avantivarman and the people were in veritable despair. The king was very much grieved and thought of several plans for the relief of the people, but what could he do against the great monster—"Famine".

At that time appeared a man, name SUYYA. His birth is woven in mystery. When a baby, he had been left by some unfortunate woman in a covered earthen pot on the roadside and was picked up by a Candala woman, named Suyya, while sweeping there. She got him nourished in the house of a Sudra woman, who named him after that of his adopted mother. He grew up into an intelligent youth and having obtained some education, became a private teacher. Possessed as he was of a sharp intellect, there was always a cluster of sensible men around him. Whenever there was a talk of famine, he would say that he knew how to banish this monster if he were provided with the means. King Avantivarman came to know of Suyya's observation and summoned the man to his presence. Questioned as to what he was saying, Suyya repeated the same words. He would not explain his scheme and so the courtiers declared him to be mad; yet the king wanted to test him and placed his treasures at his disposal. Suyya took many pots full of money in a boat and started towards Madavarajya the southern district of the Valley. He threw a pot of money at a village called Nandaka (Nandi on the Veshau river) which was submerged with flood water and then hastily returned, going to Yakshadara (Dyara-gul meaning the place of money, near Khadanyar below Baramula) and there threw handfuls of money into the river. Who would now doubt the man's unbalanced mind. The king, however, wished to watch the result of his doings. The famine-stricken people who were watching Suyya's operations at once jumped into the river near Dyara-gul and in order to find the precious coins cleared the bed of rocks which had rolled down into the river from the hillside and had choked up the passage. In two or three days the river bed was thus cleared. Suyya then had embankments raised on either side of the river. The river bed was further deepened and cleared of rocks. This accelerated the flow of water which speedily drained out. The submerged land reappeared. The pot full of money which he had dropped in deep water at Nandaka came into full view.

Previously the Vitasta and the Sindh met near Trigami (Trigom in the Lar Pargana) turning a large area into a swamp. But Suyya planned their confluence at the present place and regulated the course of the



Vitasta in such a manner that it flowed right through the Wular Lake. The course of the tributaries was also regulated in a similar manner. The water was channelled for irrigation purposes and each village was allotted as much water as was necessary for its crops. Suyya had many villages reclaimed from marshy tracts by having circular embankments raised all round them to keep out water, so that they looked like round bowls (*Kunda*) and hence were named Kundala. Some villages, for instance Utsa-kundal, Mara-kundal, retain this designation even to this day. As a result of these works hundreds of villages were reclaimed resulting in unprecedented bumper harvests. One *kharwar* of paddy, which used to sell at 200 *dinaras* during the years of plenty, now began to sell at 36 *dinaras*.

Suyya's memory lives in the present Sopur, the town he built on the bank of the Vitasta just at the point where it leaves the basin of the Wular Lake. He also prohibited killing of fish and water-fowl in the Wular Lake. He granted the village Suyyakundala to the Brahmans in honour of his mother Suyya and constructed the *bund* Suyya-setu after her name.

Avantivarman's eventful rule was marked with internal peace and material prosperity to the country. Under him the arts of peace flourished and the rights of humanity were respected. He paid minute attention to everything that tended to promote the well being of the population. During his reign Kashmir enjoyed a respite from natural as well as man-made calamities. Listening to the end the recital of the Bhagawad-gita, this amiable prince passed away near the shrine of Jyeshtheswara at Triphar, on the 3rd day of the bright-half of Asada, in the year 3959 Laukika (June, 883 A.D.).

SAMKARAVARMAN (883-902 A.D.), his son and successor, had to contend at first with several descendants of Utpala, each of whom aspired to acquire the throne. Ratnavardhana, son of Sura, who was now the most powerful minister, remained loyal to him, but another councillor set up Sukhavarman, son of Suravarman, as Yuvraj. Soon the king and the Yuvraj were at war in which the Yuvraj was defeated and imprisoned.

Having freed himself of all pretenders to the throne, Samkaravarman, according to the Chronicler, started on a round of foreign expeditions, "though the country had through the action of time become reduced in population and wealth." The first object of his expedition was the recapture of Darvabhisara, the tract of the lower hills between the Jhelum and the Chenab, which had been lost during the unsettled times of the later Karkota kings. Prithvicandra, the ruler of Trigarta,

the present Kangra, who came to offer homage is said to have fled in terror on seeing his immense army.

The main force of Samkaravarman's attack appears to have spent itself in a victory over Alakhana, the ruler of Gurjara. This territory, the name of which is preserved in that of the modern town of Gujrat in West Punjab, comprised the upper portion of the land between the Jhelum and the Chenab south of Darvabhisara. Alakhana submitted and ceded a part of his dominions, called Takkadesha, to Samkaravarman. The king then returned to Kashmir and built a town which he called Samkarapura (17 miles below Srinagar on the Baramula road) after his own name. Two temples built by the king and his queen in the new city, though now in ruins, are still standing. In constructing his town Samkaravarman was base enough to carry away all material that he found of value from Parihaspura, the favourite city of Lalitaditya.

Another expedition which Samkaravarman led to extend his kingdom was against Lalliya whom he desired "to remove from his sovereign position."<sup>1</sup> But though Kalhana gives details of the campaign, he is cautious regarding the result, which we may assume to have been without any material success of his arms in this direction.

Samkaravarman was unlike his father a narrow-minded, avaricious and stern king. His rule appears to have been characterized by excessive fiscal exactions and consequent oppression. He resumed villages bestowed by former kings on different temples. As many as sixty-four temples were plundered by him. He introduced the system of forced labour, chiefly for transport purposes with the greatest rigour. This system of 'Begar' which spelled misery to the villagers, remained a characteristic feature of Kashmir administration till the beginning of the present century. We find the Kayasthas the caste of rapacious officials, favoured by the king, whereas poets like Bhallata (the author of *Bhallatasataka* and a dictionary called *Padmanjari*) not cared for. He did not talk in Sanskrit but used vulgar language and ridiculed orthodoxy. He slew Naravahana, the ruler of Darvabhisara, at night, though the latter bore no ill-will towards him—a crime of black and unredeemed treachery.

Kalhana follows up his censures of Samkaravarman's short-sighted policy by an ironical reference to the fate which overtook his

1 Lalliya who was a Brahman had overthrown the last of the Turki Sahiya kings, the descendants of Kanishka. The Turki Sahiya kings had ruled in Kabul until the capture of that city by the Arab general Yakub-i-Lais in A.D. 870. After that date the capital was shifted to Ohind, on the Indus. The dynasty founded by Lalliya, known as that of the Hindu Sahiyas, lasted until A.D. 1021, when it was extirpated by the forces of Mahmud Ghazni.

only foundation. Samkarapura, the town that was to have borne his name, never rose to significance. His name was considered a word of ill-omen and, therefore, Samkarapura was called only Pattan (city). Providence did not leave him without hitting him hard by way of punishment for he lost several sons who all met with sudden death.

Samkaravarman's life and reign also found a violent end. Sukharaja who was the king's evil minister had appointed his nephew to the high office of the 'Lord of Marches'. He was killed in a frontier affray at Viranaka a village in the Jhelum valley below Baramula. The king to avenge his death himself marched at the head of his troops and after punishing the tribes inhabiting the narrow valley near Viranaka, proceeded towards the Indus. The expedition does not seem to have been a success and on his way back he was attacked and killed in Urusha (Hazara) on the 7th of the dark fortnight of Phalguna, 3977 Laukika (902 A.D.). To avoid the annihilation of the army at the hands of the tribesmen of the Jhelum valley, Sukharaja and other ministers cleverly concealed his death for six days until the army was conducted safely across the Kashmir boundary, four marches below Baramula, where the funeral was performed. This distinct indication of the frontier-line shows how little the political authority of Kashmir had advanced westwards by Samkaravarman's conquering expeditions.

GOPALAVARMAN (902-904 A.D.), his son, still a child, ascended the throne under the guardianship of his mother, Sugandha. The minister Prabhakardeva, who was the widow-queen's paramour, exercised the real powers of the king. Kalhana records how on a victorious expedition which he had led against the seat of the Sahiya power at Udbhandapura (modern Und), he "bestowed the kingdom of the rebellious Sahi upon Toramana, Lalliya's son, and gave him the new name of Kamaluka" reference to whom is made in Alberuni's list of the rulers of this dynasty.

After a nominal rule of two years, Gopalavarman was destroyed by the ambitious and unscrupulous minister through magic and in his place SAMKUTA a suppositious son of Samkaravarman was installed as king. He, however, died after only ten days' rule and then SUGANDHA (904-906 A.D.) herself assumed the royal power. She founded the town of Gopalapura (Guripur, a village on the left bank of the Jhelum below Avantipura), Gopalamatha, the temple of Gopalakesva, and another town, Sugandhapura.

The only hope of the Utpala dynasty continuing to rule the kingdom was lost when Jayalakshmi a wife of Gopalavarman, who was enciente gave birth to a dead child. Sugandha then wished the



kingdom to go to one of her relations. She called her ministers together and asked them to select a fit successor to her. She wanted to have Nirjitavarman, one of her relatives, nick-named Pangu (lame), to be nominated but the ministers did not favour his selection. Meanwhile the Tantrins, a military caste of uncertain origin, who had assumed the position of true Praetorians raised PARTHA, son of Nirjitavarman, to the throne, though he was yet a boy of ten years and removed Sugandha who was disliked for her low morals, after a rule of two years.

Sugandha who had run away after her deposition to Hushkapura was secretly planning to stage a come-back. In 914 A.D. she collected enough troops of Ekangas, another body of soldiery, the rivals of Tantrins, and marched against Partha. But with the aid of Tantrins, he easily defeated her and taking her prisoner put her to death,

But the country was no better under the new rule. During the fifteen years of Partha's nominal reign, the country was a prey to the oppression of Tantrins. Nirjitavarman, who had been rejected as unfit for the throne by the ministers for his low moral character, became the child-king's guardian. He could maintain himself only by paying heavy bribes to the Tantrins. In the exactions by which they oppressed the land, the soldiers were helped by unscrupulous ministers, among whom the brothers Samkarvardhana and Sambuwardhana rose to prominence. Their father Meruwardhana built the famous temple called Meruwardhanaswamin, at Puranadisthana (Pandrenthan) which is still extant, standing in the water of a shallow tank.

In 917/18 A.D. a famine occurred owing to the autumn rice crop having been destroyed by floods and the wrath of Nature was added to the oppressions of man. A *kharwar* of paddy sold at one thousand *dinaras*. People perished of starvation by thousands. The greedy ministers took advantage of this catastrophe also ; they made fortunes by selling stores of grain at exorbitant prices.

Partha and Nirjitavarman were not on good terms. Sometimes the son gained the upper hand and ousted his father and sometimes the father prevailed and was restored to power. In this way the quarrel went on. In 921 A.D., NIRJITAVARMAN overthrew his son by the help of Tantrins and declared himself king. His reign lasted two years and one month and before his death he placed his child-son CAKRAVARMAN (923-33 A.D.) on the throne.

This child-king reigned for ten years under the guardianship of his mother and grandmother, until in 933 A.D., the Tantrins deposed him and raised SURAVARMAN (933-34 A.D.), the son of Nirjitavarman from another wife, to the throne. This king was gifted with good

qualities but the mercenary Tantrins did not like him because he would not give them rich gifts which they expected for their having given him the kingdom. So after a year they deposed him also and elevated Partha again for a year to the throne when Cakravarman again came on the scene and promised them bigger rewards.

On his restoration, however, Cakravarman found that he had no money in the treasury to pay to the Tantrin soldiers and, therefore, fled away towards the northern districts, having occupied the throne for only a year.

Samkaravardhana the wicked minister accompanied his master to voluntary exile but secretly wished to avail of this opportunity to seize the throne. He sent his brother Sambhuvardhana to negotiate with the Tantrins. SAMBHUVARDHANA (A.D. 935-36) played false with his elder brother and secured the throne for himself offering still greater bribes to the Tantrins.

After he had lost his kingdom, Cakravarman sought and received in 936 A.D. the aid of a powerful Damara, named Samgrama. The Damara collected a large and ferocious army and Cakravarman marched at its head to seize the capital. The Tantrin troops, led by Samkaravardhana who had by now made up with his brother, met him at Pampur and a bloody battle ensued and was fought with an obstinacy suitable to the prize for which the parties contended. The splendid heroism exhibited by Cakravarman who himself killed Samkaravardhana won admiration from all. The Tantrins lost heavily and were completely routed. Cakravarman made then a triumphal entry into the capital and avenged himself by the execution of Sambhuvardhana who had been captured.

Though the power of the Tantrins seemed to have been crushed completely by Cakravarman's victory he profited by it but little. He abandoned himself to a life of pleasure. A Domba musician named Ranga who had come from a distant place outside Kashmir with his two daughters, Hamsi and Nagalata, was received by the king at his court to entertain him. These two girls were pretty and the king falling in love with them took them into his seraglio, paying no regard to the fact that they belonged to a low caste. Hamsi became the chief queen. The Dombas had great influence at the court, but the Damaras who had helped him in recovering his kingdom were despised and even killed by him. Things reached the culminating point in 937 A.D. when the Damaras plotted to kill this proud king. One night (8th of the bright fortnight of Jestha, 937 A.D.) some Damaras, finding him unarmed, treacherously murdered him in the arms of his Domba queen.

UNMATTAVANTI (937-939 A.D.) whom the ministers now installed as king proved to be a still more immoral person. A son of Partha, he justified his appellation of 'mad king' by his excesses in display and debauch. He was always surrounded by people who could amuse him by {their {vulgarity. Parvagupta, an ambitious minister, who was scheming to capture the throne for himself, induced the {depraved king to {destroy his own relatives. The old Partha, the king's father, was still living with his family at Jayendravihara at Srinagar, where the charity of the Buddhist monks supported him in his helpless poverty. Unmattavanti first had Partha's young sons, his own half-brothers, carried away from there to prison, where he let them die of hunger. Subsequently Partha himself was attacked at night in the Vihara and cruelly murdered. The parricide king did not enjoy long the security he had purchased by the extermination of his near relatives. He fell a victim to consumption and died in July 939 A.D. after placing on the throne a young child, SURAVARMAN by name, whom his concubines had picked up from somewhere and had falsely declared to be the king's son.

This child-king was on the throne for only a few days. Kamalavardhana, the commander-in-chief, who desired to seize the throne and who was marching upon the city from the district of Maraj easily defeated the Tantrins and royal troops and entered the palace unopposed. It was now easy for the victorious commander-in-chief to seat himself on the vacant throne, but to give a semblance of legality to it, he sought his election as king from an assembly of Brahmins.

The assembled wiseacres, whom Kalhana describes with much humour, proved refractory and debated for several days, while Purohita corporations collected *en masse* and started a solemn fast to enforce a decision. Ultimately the choice of the assembly fell on the Brahman, YASASKARA, the son of Gopalavarman's treasurer Prabhakardeva, who had left Kashmir in poverty and had just then returned to his birth-place with a reputation for learning and eloquence.

#### YASASKARA (939-48 A.D.) AND HIS SUCCESSORS

The choice of the electors was fully justified by the benevolent rule of Yasaskara. The kingdom obtained a respite from civil war and internal troubles which had oppressed it. The rapidly changing reigns after Avantivarman had reduced the people to the lowest depth of misery. Kalhana praises the manifold virtues of this king and the beneficent nature of his rule. The unruly officials who plundered the royal treasury were brought under control, and the land became so free from robbery that at night the shops were left open and the roads



were secure for travellers. Trade and agriculture flourished, and the moral tone of the people improved.

Kalhana gives a very favourable account of the wisdom of Yasaskara's administration of justice and quotes two illustrations intended to show his skill in the interpretation of legal contracts. Once a man who was driven to committing suicide by starvation by the unscrupulous conduct of a merchant represented to the king ; "I was once a wealthy man, but falling on bad days I became poor and contracted debts. The creditors who were demanding money were pestering me. The only way, I thought, of clearing my debts was to sell off my property and go abroad in search of employment. So I sold my house to a merchant.

"There was a well attached to this house which yielded rent from vegetable growers and this I retained for the sustenance of my wife while I was away. Returning with a small fortune, I found on arrival my wife eking out her existence by working as a maid in a household. Knowing well that I had left for her sufficient means of maintenance, her pitiable plight surprised me. She, however, told me that the merchant who had purchased my house had driven her away from the well, saying that the house had been sold by me *together* with the well. I had recourse to law courts but they dismissed my claim. I am, therefore, going to put an end to my life."

The king summoned the judges and the merchant to his presence and inquired into the matter. They showed him the sale deed in which it was clearly written that the man had sold his house *together* with the well. But the king had doubts about it. He changed the subject of his talk, as though he had been fully satisfied on seeing the deed, and diverted his councillors' attention by discussion of some other topic. He showed an interest in the jewels that they wore and took out also from the merchants' finger his ring for a closer examination. While admiring it he retired to another apartment telling them all to wait till he came back. From there he secretly sent a messenger with the ring to the merchant's house instructing him to show it to his accountant as a token and to get from him the daily account book of the year in which the deed had been executed for being produced before the court where it had been immediately demanded. When the book was brought, the king examined the entries under the date on which the deed had been executed and found among other items of expenditure an entry of 1,000 *dinaras* paid to the official Registrar. A small sum was payable as fee and the payment of this high sum plainly showed that the Registrar had been bribed to interpolate *sa* (together) in place of *ra* (without) in the deed. Then he

had not only the well but also the whole house restored to the plaintiff and the merchant was suitably punished.

On another occasion a distressed man represented that he had 100 gold coins tied in his clothes which accidentally fell into a well. A man offered to get the coins out and he promised that if he succeeded in recovering the coins, he might return him any amount he liked.

"But he gave me," he said, "only two coins and openly retained for himself ninety-eight. When I remonstrated against this and appealed to the people who were assembled there, I was frowned out being told that in your reign all transactions are carried out in strict pursuance of the letter of the agreement."

The king consoled him and summoning the man who had retained the lion's share of the coins, recorded his statement. The man repeated precisely what the complainant had said earlier, and asserted that he had done it in accordance with the man's own stipulation. The king adjudged ninety-eight coins to be returned to the complainant and only two to be retained by the man who had brought them out of the well. "The man", declared the king, "had stipulated that whatever *you liked* may be given to him and since you liked ninety-eight coins which you wanted to keep, they belong to him, and the two which you did not like and handed over to him, actually are your share of the amount."

King Yasaskara built a *matha* for the residence of students from other parts of India and granted fifty-five land-grants to deserving Brahmans.

Yasaskara's own character was not, however, without a blemish. He raised to the position of governor a man whose intrigues with the queens he connived at. He had a woman, named Lalla, in his seraglio who wielded great influence on him, though he knew that she was having shameful relations with a low class man. Yasaskara was not a prudent king even. He displayed great joy at the death of his eldest brother, which naturally led people to suspect that he had administered poison to him.

Yasaskara who was attacked by a fatal illness, after having reigned for nine years got his cousin, Varnata, installed as king, over the claims of his own son, Samgramadeva, whom he suspected of having been begotten in adultery.

VARNATA (948 A.D.) was not given to rule for more than a day and rightly so. He, after sitting on the throne, was ungrateful enough not to have visited Yasaskara to inquire about his condition. The latter getting angry and instigated by his scheming minister, Parvagupta,

canceled this succession and had his child-son SAMGRAMADEVA (948-949), installed as king. Yasaskara repaired to his *matha* to die there. His end was most miserable; he was forsaken even by his own family. He had 2,500 gold pieces in his clothes which his vulture-like ministers snatched away from his helpless hands and divided among themselves under his very eyes while he lay rolling in agony on his death bed.

The minister Parvagupta who had his eye fixed on the crown since the days of Unmattavanti and whose power became supreme after Yasaskara's death, first put Samgramadeva's grandmother as the child-king's guardian and himself, together with other ministers, exercised all the power. Not satisfied with this he collected his troops and laid siege to the palace, intending to sweep away the nominal ruler, Samgramadeva, also. Samgramadeva had a faithful minister, Ramavardhana, who put up a fight but Parvagupta slew him together with his son. This infernal wicked minister then entered the palace and killed Samgramadeva most cruelly, dragging him down from the throne and throwing him into the Jhelum with a stone tied to his neck.

PARVAGUPTA (949-50 A.D.) who was descended from a humble family of clerks did not enjoy long the possession of the crown which he had obtained with so much treachery. During the short rule, however, he oppressed the people and exacted money from them. To perpetuate his memory he founded with his ill-gotten wealth the shrine of Siva, called Parvaguptesvara, at the Skandabhavanvihara, on the right bank of the Jhelum near the sixth bridge in Srinagar.

This wicked king proposed to a widow of Yasaskara, named Gauri, a lady of superb beauty. But she was a pure-hearted woman and this insult was unbearable to her. She, however, desired to see the temple of Yasaskarsvamin, which her husband had left unfinished, completed, and so she sent him word that she would marry him provided he first completed this temple. Parvagupta was delighted to receive this conditional consent and fired with lustful desire he got the temple completed with the greatest possible speed. He now expected to win his sweetheart but lo ! this virtuous lady suddenly kindled a fire and, in order to save her honour, jumped into it and was killed.

The circumstances of the king's private life including this tragic and horror-inspiring incident made him the object of intense odium and scorn, while his public acts and infidelity to his master, Samgramadeva, left an indelible stigma on his reputation.

Within a year and a half of his accession he died of dropsy leaving the throne to his son and successor, KSHEMAGUPTA (950-958 A.D.). The new king was a youth grossly sensual and addicted to drinking,



gambling and other vices. A court of depraved parasites encouraged him in his excesses. The famous Jayendravihara which had been built by Jayendra, the maternal uncle of king Pravarasena II, was burned down by the king's soldiers because a powerful Damara had taken refuge there and the priests would not give him into their hands. For the benefit of his own temple named Kshemagauresa, he plundered this *vihara* using the molten brass of the Buddha image in it to cast the image for his own temple. This perhaps is the only signal act of his reign.

#### DIDDA THE DOMINATING QUEEN

Insignificant as Kshemagupta was as a ruler, he was yet destined to influence materially the history of Kashmir during the next centuries by his marriage with Didda, the daughter of Simharaja, chief of Lohara. This territory which has left its name to the present valley of Lohrin, comprised the mountain districts immediately adjoining Kashmir Valley on the south-west and now included in the Poonch district. Kshemagupta's union with Didda brought Kashmir under the rule of the Lohara family, which continued to hold Kashmir as well as its own original home down to the times of Kalhana and later.

The king was so enamoured of his wife that people nick-named him 'Diddakshema'. We have documentary evidence of this exceptional position in the legend of Kshemagupta's coins where the *Di* prefixed to the king's name is undoubtedly intended as an abbreviation of *Didda*. He also married the daughter of Phalguna, his chief minister, named Candralekha. The maternal grandfather of queen Didda named Bhima Sahi, built during Kshemagupta's lifetime the temple of Bhimakshava at Bumzu near Martand, and endowed it with rich grants of land.

Kshemagupta who was passionately fond of jackal-hunts contracted a violent fever during one of these. He was removed to his *matha* at Baramula and there he died on the 9th day of the bright fortnight of Pausa (December) in the year Laukika 4034 (958 A.D.)

Kshemagupta's child-son, ABHIMANYU (958-972 A.D.), was now installed as king, his mother Didda becoming the regent and exercising all royal power herself. Cruel, suspicious, unscrupulous, and licentious in the extreme, Didda combined in her character an inordinate lust for power with statesman-like sagacity, political wisdom, and administrative ability.

The early years of the queen's regency were full of troubles and risks. Didda had been in enmity with the prime minister, Phalguna, owing to the jealousy she had with her rival, his daughter. The old commander-in-chief, Rakka, now poisoned her mind against him saying

that he was preparing to usurp the throne. Phalguna came to know of this and, to avoid a mishap to himself, left for Poonch where he intended to stay until the return of his son, Kardamaraja, who had gone to deposit the ashes of Kshemagupta into the Ganges. He was accompanied by a large force and while he was on his way, Didda sent her orderlies after him. The general returned with his troops to Baramula. Didda and her advisers on hearing of his return were afraid lest he raise the banner of revolt, but Phalguna left his sword at the feet of the image of god Varaha at Baramula and so dispelled all suspicion of treason from the mind of Didda. Phalguna then proceeded to Poonch to the great joy of other ministers who were jealous of his power, and Didda, who was afraid of his influence and power, now began to breathe freely.

But Didda had yet to encounter real enemies. Parvagupta's grandsons, Mahiman and Patala, born of his two daughters, were eager to seize the throne. The queen had ordered to deport them, but they collected a force and arrayed themselves for a battle at Pampur. At this critical moment the minister Naravahana remained faithful to the queen and stood by her. The queen managed to bribe several of the pretenders' supporters and promised high posts to many, and thus the revolt fizzled out.

Yasodhara, who was one of these, and to whom the queen had been obliged to give the chief command of her forces, had to face the same fate as befell Phalguna. Once he led an expedition against the Sahi ruler, Thakkana, and won a victory. This caused jealousy among other officials and they intrigued to poison the mind of the queen against him, telling her that he would now seize her throne. When the commander-in-chief expecting royal favours for the victory he had gained, returned, the queen to his great surprise, sent orderlies to deport him. This insult created another rebellion. The troops got disaffected and the situation became critical for the queen, but at this crisis also the faithful minister, Naravahana, stood by her side. With his help and advice the queen gathered her troops and a skirmish took place in which the rebels were defeated. Then the infuriated queen took a terrible vengeance by mercilessly executing all captured rebels and exterminating their families.

On Naravahana she conferred honours and continued to rule with his advice. But the royal favours, as in the case of others before him, were a prelude to his destruction. Other officials got envious of Naravahana and the intrigues began to be directed against him. The fickle-minded queen was led astray by them and her ears were poisoned against Naravahana. When one day the minister invited her to a feast

she refused to accept the invitation, and this and other insults drove the loyal minister to suicide.

Didda now wanted a strong minister to assist her in carrying on the government and she recalled Phalguna from Poonch. This minister once hated and dreaded, became the favourite and a paramour of this dissolute old woman.

Abhimanyu, himself bearing an irreproachable character, became miserable and sick to see the evil conduct of his mother. He contracted consumption and died in 972 A.D. Over and above the repressions suffered by the people as a result of the misrule of his mother, a devastating fire destroyed a large part of Srinagar during his reign.

Abhimanyu was succeeded by his son, NANDIGUPTA (972-73 A.D.). The grief of her lost son softened for some time the heart of Didda and she, in expiation of her immoral acts, founded several temples and villages in different parts of the kingdom, amongst which were Diddamatha, now known by the name of Diddamar, a *mohalla* in Srinagar on the right bank of the river near the seventh bridge.

But this conduct of hers lasted for a year only. She then forgot her grief and her lust for pleasure and power returned. She destroyed Nandigupta by witch-craft as also her another grandson, TRIBHUVANA (973-75 A.D.) who had ascended the throne after his brother's death.

Didda's third and last grandson, BHIMAGUPTA (975-981 A.D.) who was yet a child, was installed as king under his guardianship. Some time after, the minister Phalguna died. The wicked queen was, out of respect for him, concealing her shameless acts, but directly he died she began to commit excesses with impunity. She fell in love with a buffalo herdsman, Tunga by name, who had come to Kashmir from Poonch and who had obtained service as a letter-carrier. Bhuyya, a pious man who after Abhimanyu's death had induced the queen to desist from sinful deeds, disliked the despicable conduct of hers and she, unable to get rid of him by honourable means, had recourse to the method she knew well enough and succeeded before long in disposing him of by poison.

After four or five years Bhimagupta was a little more developed in intellect and realised that his grandmother's way of living was bad. The diabolical and perverse-minded Didda, thereupon, getting alarmed imprisoned him and put him to death by torture.

DIDDA (981-1003 A.D.) now ascended the throne herself. She elevated her paramour, Tunga, to the post of chief minister and his five brothers to other important offices of State. The discontented ministers



and officials who were ousted entered into league to raise a rebellion. They brought Vigraharaja, a relative of Didda, into the conspiracy and spread disaffection among the Brahmans inducing them to hold solemn fasts (*prayopavesa*) against the queen and Tunga. But Tunga's valour and Didda's cunning diplomacy and bribes defeated these attempts. During her reign of twenty-five years, there were political intrigues, murders, banishments and denunciations, *ad infinitum*.

The chief of Rajauri, Prithvipala, showed signs of unrest and Tunga led an expedition against him. Prithvipala attacked the Kashmir troops in a defile and killed two of the ministers. Then Tunga together with his brothers entered Rajauri by another route and set fire to the town. By this successful attack, Prithvipala was forced to surrender and pay tribute. Tunga, victorious and triumphant, returned to Srinagar and in recognition of the victory was made also commander-in-chief of Didda's army.

The statesman-like instinct and political ability which must be ascribed to Didda in spite of all the defects of her character are attested by the fact that she remained to the last in possession of the Kashmir throne, and was able to bequeath it to her family in undisputed succession. In order to assure the latter she appointed Samgramaraja, the son of her brother, Udayaraja, the ruler of Lohara, as heir-apparent choosing him amongst a large number of her other nephews, all young boys. She placed a heap of apples before them and told them that she would see how many could each pick up. There was a scramble among these youngsters. But she noticed that Samgramaraja had picked up not only the largest number, but was quite unhurt. She asked him how he had succeeded in getting so many and he replied that while remaining aloof from the scramble he had induced other boys to do so and in the fighting that ensued he had picked up the fruits with ease. On hearing this, that adept in statecraft, Didda considered him the wisest and fittest of them all for the throne of Kashmir.

And thus when the aged queen died in 1003 A.D., after half a century of ruthless government, first as queen consort, then as regent and ultimately as sovereign, the crown passed quietly and without a contest or convulsion to the new dynasty, the House of Lohara.



## CHAPTER SIX

### THE DECLINE OF HINDU RULE

THE BRIEF SPELL of imperialism which Kashmir experienced under Lalitaditya was perhaps the best period in its history. All that was good and bright in a people brilliantly shone forth and the small kingdom was raised to the pinnacle of glory by a succession of eminent rulers.

Though the end of the rule of the Karkota dynasty was inglorious, the subsequent rule of Avantivarman of the Utpala dynasty was benevolent and peaceful and learning and art received patronage.

After this, however, the history of Kashmir is written in decay. The quick succession of brief and oppressive reigns, intrigues and rebellions, civil war and political murders, reduced the kingdom to a minor principality, shorn of its past glory and of all the territories tributary to it.

The change of dynasty after Didda's death, however, made no appreciable difference to the kind of rule that the unfortunate people had grown accustomed to. SAMGRAMRAJA (1003-28 A.D.) who succeeded her, retained Tunga in his post of prime minister. The prudent but personally weak king would not attend to the affairs of the State and Tunga was, therefore, supreme in power. Tunga had in the earlier part of Samgramaraja's rule to face a revolt of ministers and Brahmans. But he quelled the rising with a strong hand. Some rebels were killed, some imprisoned and others banished.

#### MAHMUD'S INVASION

The period covered by Samgramaraja's reign witnessed a great upheaval in the political conditions of Northern India, which was destined to fundamentally change the course of Indian history. Mahmud of Ghazni led a number of expeditions and swept across the Indus valley and along the Punjab plains in the early decades of the eleventh century. He did indeed stop short of the mountain-ramparts protecting Kashmir, and the several expeditions which Mahmud led in that direction never seriously threatened the independence of the Valley.

Nevertheless, we find a distinct record of these events in Kalhana's Chronicle in the account of the expedition which was despatched to the assistance of Trilochanpala.

In Mahmud's fourth expedition to India, Anandapala, the ruler of Udbhandapura, was, after a hard and prolonged struggle, compelled to make peace. After Anandapala's death, Mahmud turned again towards India and this time Anandapala's son, Trilochanpala, who had also previously met this foe in war during his father's reign, went to beat him back. He asked Samgramaraja for help against the enemy. Samgramaraja sent a large body of troops under the command of Tunga. These troops were not fully versed in the new tactics of war which the invaders were adopting and of which Trilochanpala had by then gained enough experience. Trilochanpala therefore advised Tunga to take a defensive position on a high place of vantage. But he, proud of his fancied bravery, neglecting this sound advice rashly attacked Mahmud's army on the bank of the river Tause, some distance from Poonch. He defeated a detachment of the enemy sent on reconnaissance. Next morning Tunga was surrounded by the full force of Mahmud. A fierce battle ensued in which Tunga was defeated and Trilochanpala's forces routed. Trilochanpala fought bravely and although subsequently he made several attempts to regain his territory and throne, they proved of no avail. The downfall of that once powerful dynasty of Sahiyas was complete.

Crest-fallen Tunga returned to Kashmir to face fresh intrigues which ended in his disgrace and death. His son, Kandarpasimha, who had become haughty and was going about with pomp and show was hated by the king, who now planned to have both the father and the son arrested simultaneously. Tunga came one day to the palace accompanied by his son. This was a favourable opportunity for the conspirators to make an end of them. When they were coming out after an audience with the king, the conspirators fell on them in the palace compound and cut them up with swords. Tunga's attendants put up a brave fight, but were overpowered and killed by the royal troops.

After Tunga the commander-in-chief's post was conferred on Naga, one of whose brothers had been the prime mover in the conspiracy against Tunga. Bhadreshwara who, like Naga the commander-in-chief, was a mean fellow, became the prime minister. He was the son of a vegetable gardener and had for some time adopted the calling of a butcher and fuel-vendor. Tunga, himself of mean origin, had appointed him as his assistant but he was secretly planning his master's overthrow all the while. Other posts of responsibility were given to equally bad men who robbed the treasury as well as the people.

Kalhana is, however, silent on Mahmud's attack on Kashmir which occurred probably in his sixth expedition to India when he marched to invade the Valley *via* the Tosamaidan pass. The fort of



Lohkot on the southern slopes of the Pir Panjal range, and not far from the Tosamaidan pass, stood in the way and this brought Mahmud's only serious attempt at the conquest of Kashmir to a standstill. Weather seems to have played the decisive role. The siege of this stronghold at which Alberuni too was present, proved fruitless. "After a while, when the snow began to fall and the season became intensely cold, and the enemy received reinforcements from Kashmir,"<sup>1</sup> the Sultan was obliged to abandon his design and to return to Ghazni.

Samgramaraja died in 1028 A.D. and his son and immediate successor, HARIRAJA (1028 A.D.), who is said to have been a youth of good disposition, ruled for only twenty-two days. His death is attributed to his licentious mother, Srilekha, who endeavoured to secure the crown for herself after him.

To the great disappointment of the queen, the nobles of the kingdom installed her young son ANANTA (1028-1063 A.D.) as king. Ananta's paternal uncle, Vighraharaja, the ruler of Lohara, who had been intriguing for a long time to secure the throne for himself, made an attempt to oust Ananta, but he was defeated and together with his followers was burnt to death in a *matha* where he took refuge and which was set on fire by the royal soldiers.

Ananta, however, proved a feeble, cowardly prince, utterly unable to cope with the difficulties thickening around him. He depended upon the advice and administrative skill of two Sahi princes, Rudrapala and Diddapala who took service under him. They were highly paid and wielded enormous influence. Rudrapala attained such eminence that the Raja of Julundhar, Inducandra, gave his daughter to him in marriage, and he prevailed upon Ananta to marry her younger sister named Suryamati. With this relationship with the king, Rudrapala was emboldened to further rob the State of its revenues. The weak king could not prevent officials like Dullaka and Padmaraja to embezzle state funds. No wonder that he was impoverished and being addicted to chewing betel leaves, pawned even his crown to Padmaraja.<sup>2</sup> The queen had to redeem it with funds from her own treasury. He

1 Alberun's *India* ; ii. p. 13.

2 An incidental observation of Kalhana pertaining to Padmaraja, the betel merchant with whom Ananta had pawned his royal diadem, throws light on the political conditions prevailing in northern India during this time. Padmaraja was also an agent of King Bhoja of Malwa for the supply to him of holy water from the spring of Kapatesvara in Kashmir. He employed a relay of carriers from Kashmir to Malwa for this purpose. This shows that notwithstanding the political isolation of Kashmir and the Muhammadan conquest of the region to the south, regular intercourse and trade with the Hindu kingdoms of the rest of India must have continued.

was fond of horses and employed mean jockeys with whom he was as intimate as if they were his equals.

With the death of the two Sahi princes, Ananta, who seems to have been incapable of carrying on the administration by himself, came, under the influence of his pious queen, Suryamati. She checked the extravagance and vagaries of the king, and gradually assumed full charge of the royal affairs. Haladhara, a servant of humble origin who by her favour rose to be prime minister, proved a strong administrator and secured for a time prosperity and peace for the land. This enabled Ananta to lead expeditions to territories adjoining Kashmir on the south and assert his authority in those tracts. We learn from Bilhana's *Vikramankadevacarita* that Ananta's supremacy was acknowledged by the princes of Campa (Chamba) and Darvabhisara. Kalhana, however, records only a victory over King Sala of Campa, who is known to us by his full name of Salavahana from a Chamba plate grant. Of Ananta's expeditions against the hill states of Urusha and Vallapura, we are distinctly told that they ended in failure and ignominious retreat.

But one feminine weakness destroyed all that queen Suryamati had achieved. Blinded by filial affection, she persuaded the king to abdicate in favour of his son, Kalasa, in the year 1063.<sup>1</sup> The object, perhaps was to put the administration into stronger hands and to secure the throne for her son. But soon after the formal coronation of Kalasa, the royal couple regretted the act, and Ananta resumed the defacto administration of the government, keeping Kalasa the nominal king.

For a number of years after Kalasa's coronation the arrangement devised by Ananta of ruling the land himself and keeping his son as the nominal king, worked well. But Kalasa came under the baneful influence of depraved and licentious companions, who drove him to commit excesses. Many a time the youthful king was involved in *fracas* in which he suffered public disgrace. This led to an open rupture between the king and his parents. Queen Suryamati, however, prevailed upon Ananta not to take strong action against Kalasa, and advised him instead to repair to the temple at Vijayeshwara along with stores and treasure. For some time Kalasa experienced difficulties for want of money but the field having been now left open, he organized the administration efficiently and raised an army to fight his father's forces.

1 At this time a similar event took place in the neighbouring principality of Lohara. Ananta's cousin Ksitiraja who ruled there, renounced the world and disliking his own son, bestowed the kingdom on Utkarsa the second son of Kalasa. This was destined later to lead to a political union of Kashmir with Lohara on Utkarsa's succession in Kashmir.



Suryamati again intervened and though Ananta with his treasure and loyal army had still the power to punish Kalasa and forcibly depose him, she prevented open hostilities to break out and effected a reconciliation. Ananta contended himself by calling Harsa, Kalasa's son, whom he desired to place on the throne, to live with him at Vijayeshwara.

This reconciliation, however, ended soon. Kalasa raised more forces and attacked Vijayeshwara, setting fire to the temple where Ananta was staying. Ananta lost his treasure and thereby the means to retain the allegiance of his troops and followers. He thus fell easily into the hands of his son who insisted on his going into exile. Ananta's condemnation of his wife's baneful advice resulted in a violent altercation between him and his wife during which he committed suicide by plunging a dagger into his abdomen. Suryamati repented for her angry words which had led to this tragedy and ended her life as a Sati on her husband's funeral pyre.

Kalasa's character changed for the better following his parents' death and devolution on him of responsibilities on assumption of full regal powers. After effecting a solemn reconciliation with his son Harsa, the king set about to improve the administration of the kingdom and by a wise and shrewd control over the state budget removed the financial stringency which had resulted from uncertain political conditions and civil war. He was thus able to make some rich endowments. He used to move about incognito over his kingdom and had thus a first-hand knowledge of the living conditions of his subjects. He punished corrupt officials and restored the confidence of the people in the government. In this he was ably assisted by capable ministers like Vaman and the great Kandarpa, the commander of the frontier defences.

An era of peace and prosperity following these measures, enabled Kalasa to assert his authority in the neighbouring principalities. An expedition in support of Samgramapala, the rightful ruler of Rajauri, restored Kashmir's suzerainty over this hill state. Similar expeditions to territories south of the Valley resulted in the consolidation of the kingdom and making his influence felt among the small hill states. This success of Kalasa's foreign policy was strikingly demonstrated in the winter of 1087-88 A.D. when he held an assembly in his capital of the rulers of eight hill states around Kashmir from Urusha in the west to Kastavata in the east. Among them was Asata the chief of Campa (Chamba), whose name is found in inscriptional records as well as in the geneological list of the Chamba Rajas; Kirti, the chief of Nilapura whose daughter was married to Kalasa; Samgramapala, the chief of



Rajauri, who was reinstated to the throne by Kalasa's forces. Utkarsa, Kalasa's second son, the chief of Lohara ; Sangata the king of Urusha ; Gambhirasiha the ruler of Kangra ; and Uttamaraja the ruler of Kastavata were the other chiefs who attended this assembly.

The last years of Kalasa were embittered by the disunion and suspicion between himself and Harsa. The youthful prince, extravagant by nature and given to a life of ostentation, felt annoyed at the scanty allowance and low regard which his miserly father bestowed upon him. Evil minded parasites took advantage of Harsa's disposition and instigated by them he connived at the hatching of a plot to murder Kalasa. This was betrayed to Kalasa, who tried to obtain from his son a repudiation of his part in it, but Harsa refused to do so. Harsa was threatened by his fellow conspirators and when he was in serious danger of losing his life at their hands, Kalasa ordered his arrest (1088 A.D.). Smitten and exasperated by the disloyal conduct of his son, Kalasa again took to the licentious life of his youthful days. He spared Harsa's life but decided to deprive him of the succession. He called his younger son, Utkarsa from Lohara in order to have him installed as ruler of Kashmir. At the approach of death, which his excesses hastened, Kalasa set out in great torments to the temple of Martand, where he died, after vainly endeavouring to see once more the imprisoned Harsa (1089 A.D.).

Utkarsa's accession to the throne was facilitated by Harsa's continued confinement in prison. His desire to retire abroad was turned down and apprehensive of his safety, he managed to win the sympathy and help of his younger half-brother Vijaymalla. The latter felt dissatisfied with the treatment he received at the hands of Utkarsa and raised an open rebellion. The cowardly Utkarsa thought of having Harsa murdered in prison, but owing to Harsa's presence of mind and his own vacillation, the murderous attempt failed. Availing himself of the confusion that prevailed in the palace following Vijayamalla's rebellion, Harsa managed to escape and seized the throne which belonged to him by right.

#### HARSA (1089-1101 A.D.)

King HARSA was a remarkable person in many ways. Possessed of exceptional prowess, he obtained renown by merits rarely to be found in other kings. Versed in many languages, a good poet, a lover of music and arts, and a repository of different branches of learning, he became famous in other kingdom too. The songs which he composed were still heard with delight in Kalhana's time. We see these and his contrasting qualities of mind, reflected in the elaborate description

which Kalhana gives of the character of this striking figure among the later Hindu rulers of Kashmir. This was no doubt based on first-hand information, such as that given by his own father Campaka. Kalhana pictures to us King Harsa as a youth of powerful frame and great personal beauty, courageous and fond of display and well versed in various sciences. In an eloquent passage, he emphasises the strongly contrasting qualities of Harsa's mind and equally strong contrasts in his actions. "Cruelty and kind-heartedness, liberality and greed, violent self-willedness and reckless supineness, cunning and want of thought—these and other apparently irreconcilable features in turn display themselves in Harsa's chequered life." From this description of Harsa's character, it can easily be gathered that he was a man of unsound condition of mind.

Harsa commenced his rule well. He showed wise forbearance in retaining many of his father's officials and trusted servants, notwithstanding their former conduct towards him. This paid quick dividends. Not only were the intrigues and disaffections, raised by his half-brother Vijayamalla, nipped in the bud, but he had to flee to, and take refuge in, Dard territory where he met his end under an avalanche. Harsa's position was thus consolidated and Kalhana gives a glowing account of the splendour of the Kashmir court at this time of his reign. He introduced many new fashions in dress and ornaments and encouraged his courtiers to imitate his own taste for costly and gaudy attire. His munificence towards men of learning and poets is said to have made even Bilhana, the well known court poet of the Calukya king, Parmadi, regret that he had left Kashmir, his native land, during Kalasa's reign. Kalhana refers to the introduction of Carnatak tunes and musical instruments and coinage into Kashmir by Harsa, and several extant coins of the king corroborate the unmistakable imitation of contemporary coinage of Carnatak. An indication of prosperity and affluence enjoyed by Kashmir during Harsa's early rule is given not only by Kalhana's description of the magnificence of Harsa's court, but by the abundant issue of gold and silver coins.

At about this time Harsa sent a strong force to assert his suzerainty over Rajauri, whose chief, Samgramapala, had for some time been trying to shake it off. The Kashmir troops under Kandarpa, the able commander-in-chief of Harsa, stormed Rajauri town and after a bitter struggle in which two hundred Kashmiri soldiers lost their lives, carried the town and forced Samgramapala to surrender and pay tribute.

But soon the evil parasites and councillors came to the fore and succeeded in securing the disgrace and banishment of this valiant and

faithful general. Treachery began to stir among those nearest to the throne. Jayaraja, a half-brother of Harsa, from a concubine of Kalasa, engaged in a dangerous conspiracy with Dhammata, a relative from another branch of the Lohara family. Harsa, however, came to know of it early, and with skilful diplomacy he drove a wedge between the two and when Jayaraja had surrendered to his fellow conspirator, Dhammata, he got him executed. Dhammata's turn followed and he together with his four sons met his death by sword and hangman. Harsa put out of the way other relatives in a similar manner, though they had given no cause for suspicion.

Extravagant expenditure on the troops and senseless indulgence in costly pleasures involved Harsa in grave financial difficulties. New and oppressive taxes were imposed, and as a characteristic feature Kalhana mentions that "even nightsoil became the object of special taxation." These, however, proved inadequate to replenish the exhausted treasury. Harsa then turned his attention to the rich endowments of temples, which he resumed. His accidental discovery of hoarded treasures at the temple of Bhima Sahi, induced him to spoliage other temples. More ruthless and revolutionary was the seizure and melting of gold and silver images of gods and goddesses in temples throughout Kashmir and Kalhana's mention of a few temples which escaped Harsa's attention only shows the thoroughness of his iconoclasm. That Kalhana uses the epithet of Turuska (Muhammadan) while referring to Harsa's temple spoliations and also makes a reference to Turuska captains being employed in his army and enjoying his favour, shows that Muhammadan influence must have already penetrated to Kashmir in his time.

The rising discontent among the people who were burdened with heavy imposts, together with the unpopularity of his vandalistic acts, made Harsa fall lower in his morals and fanned by the depravity of his parasites he indulged in incipient acts of incest with his sisters and father's widows. This further sapped his strength and mental balance, and the few expeditions he led against some of the hill states who had given up his suzerainty, show him as a weak, vacillating and timid commander. An attempt to invade Rajauri, with himself in command of troops, ended in an ignominious defeat and subsequently a similar fate met his expedition for the capture of the fort of Dugdhghatta which guarded the pass leading to the Dard country. An earlier fall of snow compelled the royal forces to beat a retreat and the attack from the Dards turned it into a complete rout. It is in this campaign that we first notice the two brothers, Sussala and Uccala, valiantly fighting for the king. They were descended from a side branch of the Lohara



family and destined to succeed Harsa to the throne of Kashmir.

In 1099 A.D. fresh calamities befell the miserable people of Kashmir. While plague was raging and robbers everywhere infesting the country, there occurred a disastrous flood which carried off the ripened crops. A severe famine followed adding to the universal distress. The fiscal exactions of the king continued. To divert the attention of the discontented and rebellious people, Harsa attacked the Damaras, or feudal landlords. Kalhana gives revolting details of cruelties perpetrated on them under the king's orders.

While the Damaras of the northern division were organising a united resistance to the king's forces, Harsa's suspicions were raised against the brothers Sussala and Uccala as possible claimants to the throne. Both of them fled at night from Srinagar in the autumn of 1100 A.D., and with the help of Damaras took refuge with the hill chiefs—Uccala in Rajauri and Sussala in Kalinjara. The rebellious Damaras opened negotiations with Uccala, the elder brother, and induced him to claim the crown. His claims were based on geneological facts. He was through Jassaraj, Gunga and Malla, the fourth direct descendant from Kantiraja, the brother of Didda and uncle of king Samgramaraja of Kashmir.

Uccala being joined by a small force of rebel Damaras, boldly set out for Kashmir and crossed the Tosamaidan pass in the early months of the spring, while it was still covered with snow. There he was joined by disaffected hill tribes and Damaras and the large force so formed marched to effect a junction with the rebel Damara forces of the northern division. The combined forces under Uccala successfully attacked Harsa's governor of the district and occupied a strong position in Parihaspura. The king roused to activity by the near approach of danger attacked the pretender at Parihaspura and obtained a complete victory. Uccala escaped with difficulty while many of his followers met their death before and within the temple quadrangle of Parihaspura.

While Uccala, left unpursued by the king, was engaged in reorganising his forces in the north of Kashmir, Sussala, aided by the forces of Kalha, the ruler of Kalinjara, launched his attack on Kashmir from the south. Here he was joined by the few remaining Damara chiefs and they drove the royal forces before them in the direction of the capital. Though successfully checked for a time by Harsa's newly-appointed commander-in-chief, Candraraja, this diversion enabled Uccala to resume the offensive. Avoiding the open plain, where the king's mounted troops could effectively defeat them, the rebel Damara forces marched across the mountains into the Sindh valley where they won a complete victory over the king's army, thus leaving the road to

the capital open for Uccala.

#### HARSA'S DETHRONEMENT AND DEATH

While the rebel forces were knocking at the doors of Srinagar, Harsa, surrounded by sycophants and incapable advisers, was vacillating in his plan of action. Some advised him to abandon the city and flee to the mountain fastness of Lohara. Some were of the opinion that the king should stand fast and fight to the end. Utter confusion prevailed and there were incessant desertions. While the royal forces were getting thinner, and treason was rife among the officials and royal attendants, Harsa turned upon the innocent Malla, the father of Uccala and Sussala, who leading a life of a recluse had peacefully remained in the city. Harsa had helplessly killed and Kalhana gives a graphic account of the scene. Malla's widow, Nanda, while watching the camp fires of her son, gazing gleaming in the distance, burned herself after her husband, invoking their revenge upon the head of his murderer.

The news of this murder further infuriated Uccala and Sussala. Sussala launched his attack on Vijayeshwara and defeating the royal forces there, he moved to Srinagar in the hope of seizing the crown for himself. His attack was halted by a spirited defence by royal forces under Bhoja, Harsa's heir-apparent. Uccala at this moment launched his attack on the city from the north and aided and abetted by disloyal elements, surrounded the royal palace. Harsa led in person the remnants of his troops but while vainly attempting to halt the onslaught at the bridge in front of the palace, his fighting elephant was wounded and turning back threw his forces into disorder and panic. Harsa managed to retire across the bridge but the rebels set the adjoining buildings on fire which forced the king to leave the palace with a few mounted troops. Seventeen ladies of the royal household, among them the chief queen Vasantalekha, who was a princess of the Sahi house, burned themselves on a pavilion of the palace from which they had watched the approaching doom. The palace was sacked and set on fire by plundering Damaras who were joined by the city mob.

Harsa was eager to die fighting, but paralyzed by conflicting advice and the misfortune, he moved about helplessly on the outskirts of the city, the few attendants and followers deserting him one by one. Among the few who remained loyal to him was his minister Campaka, Kalhana's father, but he sent him away to go to the rescue of his son, Bhoja who, like his father, was also in a tight position. Ultimately Harsa after vainly trying to find refuge in the house of various grandees, took shelter in a mendicant's hut along with his devoted personal attendants,



Prayaga and Mukto. Here he learnt of the death of Bhoja at the hands of the enemy forces. Kalhana gives a pathetic account of the last days of the king in his hide-out. But after only two days, his refuge became known and soldiers were sent to capture or kill him. When he saw the hut surrounded he, after sending his cook Mukta away, prepared to fight and sell his life dearly. After a desperate resistance Harsa was slain and his head was carried before Uccala who had it burned while his body, naked like that of a pauper, was cremated by a compassionate wood dealer.

With the death of Harsa we come to the end of the Seventh Book of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*. The Eighth and the last Book, which forms nearly half of the whole work is a detailed and rather confusing account of Kalhana's contemporary times. Apart from its value as throwing light on the social and economic conditions prevailing in Kashmir then, this account is of little interest to the modern reader. The main events following Harsa's death, however, centre round the two brothers Uccala and Sussala, who being both ambitious to secure the crown engaged themselves in incessant struggles.

UCCALA, the elder brother, however, succeeded in the race to the throne of Kashmir, but his position at the time of accession was precarious. The Damaras with whose help and power he defeated and killed Harsa, were all powerful and behaved as true rulers of the land. In order to secure safety, he ceded Lohara territory as an independent chiefship to Sussala, his younger brother. To break the power of the Damara lords, he resorted to Machiavellian tactics, setting one against the other. Thus weakened, they were easily overcome and their disarmament was effected with the use of minimum force. Uccala was a capable ruler and fairly energetic. To win the sympathy of the people in general, he ruthlessly punished the unpopular Kayasthas or clerks and petty officials. He also seems to have been a just and shrewd ruler and a few anecdotes given by Kalhana illustrate this characteristic of the king. But he had his defects too. He was of jealous disposition and would not tolerate personal merits in others. He had a harsh tongue and temper which slowly alienated from him the support and loyalty of his followers.

Uccala's respite from troubles did not last long. His brother, Sussala, not content with the chiefship of a small hill state, led an attack on Kashmir, but Uccala being alert defeated him easily and he had to flee to the Dard country wherefrom he regained his own hills with very great difficulty.

But a greater danger to Uccala's throne was growing from another quarter. Bhoja's young son, Bhiksacara, had been spared by Uccala



who brought him up in his court. But having excited the king's suspicions he fled in 1045 and was given shelter by king Naravarman of Malwa.

Meanwhile Uccala effected a reconciliation with his brother Sussala, to whom a son, Jayasimha, was born in the very year of Bhikshara's escape to Malwa. But Uccala was not destined to live long. Another conspiracy developed under the leadership of the city-prefect Chudda and his brothers who though born in humble circumstances, were ambitious enough to aspire to royal power. They claimed their descent from Yasaskara and joined by discontented officials, attacked the king at night. Uccala though unarmed fought with desperate bravery, but was overpowered by his assailants and cruelly murdered (December 8, 1111 A.D.).

Utter confusion prevailed in the palace following this ghastly murder, and Radda, a brother of Chudda, whose hands were red with the king's blood, put on the crown, assuming the name of SANKHARAJA. But he could retain it only for a night, as next morning Gargacandra, leading Damara of Lar district and a trusted supporter of Uccala, attacked the traitors and overpowering them with his forces, avenged his master's death in the blood of Radda and his fellow conspirators.

Finding no suitable successor to Uccala near at hand, Gargacandra, installed SALHANA a half-brother of Uccala on the throne. But the new king proved unworthy of the position thrust on him. A weak licentious man, he let the affairs of the State be conducted by Gargacandra. Meanwhile Sussala learning of his brother's death, set out from Lohara with a small force for Kashmir. Gargacandra met his forces near Baramula and easily defeated them. Sussala had to flee over the snow-covered passes and could with great difficulty reach back Lohara.

But Gargacandra was not happy with his protege. The latter foolishly connived at a plot to kill Gargacandra which became known to the Damara chief. He thereupon opened negotiations with Sussala. Taking advantage of this favourable opportunity, Sussala again entered the Valley and was soon joined by the forces of the unpopular Salhana, and those of Gargacandra who gave him his daughter in marriage. Sussala marched on to Srinagar without opposition and entered the palace in triumph. Salhana whose reign had not lasted for more than four months, was made prisoner (March, 1112 A.D.).

SUSSALA (1112-1120 A.D.), like his brother, had to face several uprisings and attacks of pretenders. In character also he resembled Uccala and the latter's treacherous murder was a warning to his being alert and ruthless. He naturally took measures to curb the activities of

the powerful Damaras and in order to ensure a greater security for himself transferred his treasures to the mountain fastness of Lohara. This made him unpopular and he had to face internal troubles from the rebellious Damaras. Even his father-in-law, Gargacandra turned against him. With his influential relatives who owned large estates in the Valley, Gargacandra raised a dangerous uprising. Sussala had to carry his fortified seats in regular sieges before he could force this feudal lord into submission.

Gaining respite from troubles in the Valley, Sussala went to Lohara where he kept Salhana a prisoner, and renewed his friendship with the chiefs of the neighbouring hill tracts.

A disgruntled noble, Sahasramangla, whom Sussala had dismissed, then hatched a plot against him, and with the assistance of some hill chiefs, led an expedition against the Valley from the south. This incursion, which was easily defeated by Sussala's forces, however, paled into insignificance before a more serious danger from Bhiksacara who had massed his supporters in the Chenab valley.

The young prince who had escaped to King Naravarman's court at Malwa, had met a number of hill chiefs at the pilgrimage of Kuruksetra (Thanesvar). The chiefs of Campa, Vallapura (Bilawar in Jammu), and other hill states in the south of Kashmir, espoused his cause and entered into matrimonial relations with him. But fortunately for Sussala there were internal dissensions among the forces which these hill chiefs had put at Bhiksacara's disposal and he had for the time being to abandon his invasion of the Valley.

This brief interval was utilized by Sussala in his attempt to curb the power of the Damaras. He encouraged Mallakostha, a rival of Gargacandra, to fight the latter and in the struggle Gargacandra was forced to repair to Sussala's court, where he was imprisoned and together with his three sons finally hanged.

But this did not break the power of the Damaras. An ill-advised expedition to Rajauri where Sussala did not meet with appreciable success resulted in further imposts being levied on the people. This and the imprisonment of prominent Damaras, led to general unrest. Under the leadership of Prithvihara, a valiant Damara, a league of these barons was formed and when Mallakostha whom the king had meanwhile alienated, brought Bhiksacara into the Valley, the revolt acquired unity and well-defined objective.

In the summer of 1120 A.D. the ring of the rebel forces closed on Srinagar, which Sussala defended with great courage and valour. But soon he found treachery and confusion all around him. He had to

contend with Brahman assemblies who resorting to the holding of solemn fasts, wanted to assume the direction of the affairs of the State. For three months Sussala held out, but ultimately fearing a mutiny among his own troops who could no longer stand the hardships of a long siege, Sussala left the city along with a band of faithful troops. After bribing dangerous opponents on the road to gain a free passage, he ultimately reached Lohara.

On Sussala's departure, the officials and troops in Srinagar made common cause with the Damaras, and BHIKSACARA (1120-21 A.D.) was in triumph installed as king.

But he was not destined to rule for long. Of a licentious nature, he gave himself up to the pleasures of life and totally neglected the affairs of the State. The Damaras, who had now acquired supreme control over the Valley, were oppressing the people. Rivalries between their chief groups under Prithvihara and Mallakostha, further added to the confusion. The country was in chaos, and trade was at a standstill. Money became scarce and the necessities of life scarcer. "At that time", laments Kalhana, "when the land had no king or rather many kings, the rules of all business broke down manifestly."

In the midst of such troubles, Bhiksacara directed Bimba, his prime minister, to lead an expedition against Lohara, the seat of Sussala. Bimba secured the alliance of Somapala, the chief of Rajauri and aided by a force of "Turuska" or Muhammadan soldiers under Salara Vismaya, launched an attack on Sussala's forces near Poonch. Bimba's Kashmirian soldiers who were thoroughly dissatisfied with Bhiksacara's rule, deserted him and crossed over to Sussala. Bimba had to beat a retreat and Sussala marched to reconquer Kashmir. His return was eagerly awaited by the people by now disillusioned of Bhiksacara's rule. Brahman assemblies held solemn fasts directed against Bhiksacara and the helpless prince who had no resources failed to appease them. Marching rapidly from Baramula, Sussala appeared suddenly at the gates of Srinagar and unopposed by Bhiksacara once more ascended the throne (May, 1121 A.D.).

Disheartened and forsaken, Bhiksacara fled across the Pir Panjal pass to Pusayana under the protection of Prithvihara. There he established his headquarters and slowly gaining some adherents, both he and Prithvihara led a force of Damaras to attack the southern district of the Valley. Having gained military experience and being keen to avenge his defeat, he boldly attacked and defeated the royal troops at Vijayeshwara. The victorious Damaras then set fire to the temple where the people of adjoining villages had taken refuge. This act of sacrilege was the turning point in Bhiksacara's fortune, as he



became an object of derision and ridicule among the people of the Valley. Although he won several victories against the royal forces during the fight which followed this event, he could not dislodge Sussala, who had meanwhile replaced the Kashmir ministers and troop-leaders suspected of treachery by trusted and reliable people of the Chenab valley.

Bhiksacara's growing skill in conducting a guerilla type of warfare made his Damara friends jealous of him. Apprehending the danger of his gaining enough power to ultimately suppress them, their attitude towards him became lukewarm. He had therefore to repair to his place of refuge in Pusayana for the winter.

Next year he returned with his adherents to try his fortune again. Sussala, after gaining some initial advantages, was forced to beat a retreat to Srinagar to which Bhiksacara laid a protracted siege. With the help of his freshly recruited soldiers from the Punjab, Sussala held his own and when finally the Damara allies of Bhiksacara launched an assault, they were defeated and forced to raise the siege. Intermittent skirmishes continued for the rest of the year in the Valley causing enormous destruction of life and property and complete breakdown of the administrative machinery.

The following year, 1123, brought still greater sufferings for the unfortunate people. In the spring, the rapacious Damara forces again gathered around Srinagar and a prolonged and fierce seige ensued. During one of the skirmishes, the Damaras set on fire a portion of the city. The fire spread rapidly and devastated the city reducing it to ashes. Though the Damara forces were ultimately beaten off by Sussala, the city had to face the calamity of a famine, as reserve food stores for the people were destroyed in the fire. The communications with the countryside being blocked by the Damaras, who also seized the fresh crop, it was impossible to procure any grain stores and thus thousands of lives were lost.

This dealt a heavy blow to the king. Disheartened by the scenes of misery among the people and the death of his beloved queen, he abdicated in favour of his son, Jayasimha, whom he called from the castle of Lohara and crowned king in June 1123 A.D. But Sussala soon changed his mind and retained the government in his own hands. He now succeeded in effecting at least an outward pacification of the country, helped no doubt by the rivalries and dissensions prevailing among the leading Damaras. Bhiksacara, however, remained at large under the protection of his Damara allies.

Sussala now plotted to destroy his arch-enemy by assassination

and for this purpose made a secret pact with one Utpala, the treacherous agent of the Damara chief, Tikka. It was planned that Utpala, after disposing of Bhiksacara, should kill Tikka as well. Utpala, however, betrayed the king and divulged the plot to Tikka, who advised him to turn the tables on Sussala. While he was holding a secret and intimate meeting with Utpala and a party of conspirators, Sussala was seized by them unawares and mercilessly killed (February, 1128 A.D.). The stampede and confusion that ensued this ghastly deed, allowed the murderers not only to escape, but to carry off the victim's head as well as his body.

#### JAYASIMHA (1128-1155 A.D.)

The youthful son and successor of Sussala, JAYASIMHA, heard the news of his father's murder in great sorrow. Surrounded by dangers, with an empty treasury and no army, it seemed impossible for him to hold his own in the city for long. No wonder some of his close associates advised him to flee in the darkness of the night to his stronghold in Lohara.

The conditions prevailing in Kashmir at the time have been graphically described by Kalhana. The Damaras, the feudal landlords, exercised their authority in their districts or even villages, with the arms of their paid followers, and secure against the attacks of the royal forces in their strongly fortified castles, were carrying on perpetual intrigue against their rivals or the king. Like the Barons of medieval England, they often defied the king's orders and in times of unrest, the royal authority could be asserted only with force.

Taking advantage of a succession of weak rulers and constant rivalries at the court, the Damaras had overwhelmed the kingdom and in the words of Kalhana, "the city was without splendour, the citizens deprived of all means, and the land overrun by numberless Damaras who were like kings." Sussala's sixteen years of rule were passed in a relentless struggle against these haughty barons, but all his efforts failed to crush their power. Roads were unsafe for travel, fields were left uncultivated by the harassed peasantry and famine and misery ruled the land. Loot and arson followed each attack and counter-attack on cities and towns by the followers of the contending claimants to the throne.

To add to Jayasimha's fears and apprehensions, there was the imminent danger from the arch enemy of the family, Bhiksacara, who was encamped a few marches away from Srinagar.

Jayasimha, however, did not lose heart. To win the sympathy and support of the citizens of Srinagar as well as of the vacillating

soldiers, he proclaimed a general amnesty. Luck also favoured him at this critical moment. A heavy snowfall during the night prevented Bhiksacara to rapidly march on Srinagar. Meanwhile, the forces of Pancacandra, son of Gargacandra, the powerful Damara leader, whose help he had sought, joined the royal troops. The loyal elements and supporters of Sussala when they heard of his murder hurried to the aid of Jayasimha, and in the battle that ensued, Bhiksacara was defeated, his Damara followers deserting him one by one.

Jayasimha thus ascended the throne in the midst of an open rebellion, when the land was still suffering from the many wounds caused by the preceding struggles. Having been freed from the immediate danger to his throne, he set himself to the task of extending his authority over the Valley. For this he relied upon cunning diplomacy and unscrupulous intrigue, in which his prime minister Lakshmaka took a leading part. Utpala, the murderer of Sussala, was captured and executed. Soon he succeeded in winning over most of the enemies of Sussala. But in the following year, Bhiksacara returned to create fresh trouble for the king. However, the measures taken against him by Sujji, Jayasimha's able commander-in-chief, threw the pretender's forces into confusion and he was once more forced to retire. Sujji, however, was the victim of Lakshmaka's intrigue and he fled along with his loyal followers across the frontiers of the Valley and opened negotiations with Bhiksacara. The latter again marched into the Valley, but Lakshmaka's forces discomfited him, and he had to seek shelter in the fortified town of Banasila (present Banihal), where the Khasha chief betrayed him. Deserted by his Damara followers, the unfortunate pretender was apprehended and died fighting the soldiers who had been sent for his capture.

Almost immediately there arose a new rival. Lothana, a half-brother of Uccala, helped by elements disloyal to Jayasimha, was set free from his prison in Lohara. He crowned himself the ruler of that district and captured all the treasures which Sussala had accumulated in that mountain fortress. With the help of this and the disgruntled and disloyal officials and commanders of Jayasimha, he raised a force and prepared to defend his newly-won freedom and power against the forces of Jayasimha. Realizing the danger from the loss of his family stronghold, the latter despatched a considerable force under Lakshmaka across the mountains to retake it.

Lakshmaka endeavoured to reduce the hill-fortress by a blockade. But this proved fruitless and when his forces were being decimated by the summer fevers of that place and Sujji, his personal enemy, was advancing at the head of his troops from Rajauri, Lakshmaka raised



the siege and beat a retreat which soon turned into a rout. Lakshmaka was captured and it is recorded that among the Kashmirian soldiers who were able to escape, thousands died of the fever which they had contracted during this expedition. Lakshmaka was later ransomed from the chief of Rajauri and on his return to Kashmir resumed his position as chief minister of Jayasimha.

Lothana who had by this victory consolidated his position at Lohara employed Sujji as his commander-in-chief. But where military valour did not succeed, Jayasimha's intrigues against him began to bear fruit. Lothana was soon deposed by a half-brother of Jayasimha, named Mallarjuna, who had been kept as a prisoner at Lohara. Mallarjuna was a weak ruler given to the pleasures of life and could not stand the forces of Jayasimha who forced him to pay tribute. But the feuds between the new chief, Mallarjuna, and Lothana continued, and profiting by this a Damara lord, Kosthesvara, made himself virtually the master of Lohara. When, therefore, Jayasimha won over this Damara chief, as well as Sujji whom he reinstated in his office and deputed against Mallarjuna, the latter had to abandon the stronghold and flee to Rajauri. Here he was ultimately captured in 1135 A.D. Soon after, Kosthesvara was also secured and safely imprisoned in Srinagar. Sujji too, did not enjoy long the confidence of the king. Intrigues were hatched against him and he was treacherously murdered together with his relatives and followers.

Having secured peace from his rivals to the throne and also the suppression to some extent of the Damaras, Jayasimha attempted to extend his influence in territories bordering on the Valley. He tried to profit by the troubles which had broken out among his Dard neighbours at the death of their ruler Yasodhara. But instead of gaining any advantage there, the Dards under Viddasiha the new chief, created trouble for Jayasimha in return. Lothana who was living as a refugee in the Dard territory was encouraged to raise a rebellion again and with the help of a powerful Damara chief of the Kishenganga valley, Alankaracakra, he succeeded in spreading unrest in that strategic area. Jayasimha sent a powerful army and laid siege to the stronghold of the Damara lord. After the siege had continued for some time, the defenders ran short of food and water and Alankaracakra was forced to deliver up Lothana and Vighararaja, another pretender, to Jayasimha (1144 A.D.).

A fresh incursion into Kashmir by the Dard tribes, under Bhoja, another pretender to the Kashmir throne, was defeated and pushed back by Jayasimha's forces in a battle fought on the banks of the Wular Lake. Simultaneously a fresh rebellion of a few Damara lords in the

south of the Valley, was crushed by Rilhana, who had succeeded Sujji as the commander-in-chief of Jayasimha's forces. The king also succeeded in securing the surrender of the pretender, Bhoja, who appears to have later gained the confidence of the king.

Finding that there was now no pretender on the scene, whom they could use as a tool, the Damaras were demoralised and were disarmed and subdued one by one. The peace thus established in the much harassed land, enabled Jayasimha to make some pious foundations. But though Kalhana gives a long list of these, it appears that they were only in the nature of restorations of temples and towns which had suffered damage during the preceding decades of unrest and chaos.

With a mention of the members of Jayasimha's family and the matrimonial alliances he contracted with the ruling families of neighbouring hill states, Kalhana closes his monumental work, bringing down the history to the twenty-second year of Jayasimha's reign (1149-50 A.D.). From Jonaraja's brief account of the concluding years of the king's life we learn that Jayasimha ruled for five years longer, during which he undertook a successful expedition against 'Yavana' Turuskas, who, however, cannot be identified.

For the history of the remaining period of the Hindu rule we have to depend upon the account furnished by Jonaraja who wrote in 1459 A.D. It is only an outline, in contrast to Kalhana's exhaustive and detailed account of the rule of his contemporary kings.

Jayasimha was succeeded by his son PARAMANUDEVA, who during his rule of ten years was mainly concerned with filling up his treasury with the assistance of two officials, Prayaga and Janaka. The inscriptions on the foundations of the temple unearthed at Tapar, mention its erection by this king and the extensive dimensions of the ruins corroborate the statement about his affluence.

His son VANTIDEVA succeeded him to the throne at his death in 1164 A.D. and after an uneventful rule of seven years, died in 1171 A.D. With his death, the Lohara dynasty came to an end for want of an heir.

The deterioration in the social and moral condition of the people following the long centuries of misrule and oppression, can be gauged by the fact that when the nobles assembled to choose a successor to the vacant throne, they could find no better person to be installed as king than one UPYADEVA who was, says the Chronicler, "the very model of a dunce. Once this foolish king felt happy at the sight of large blocks of stone, and he ordered his ministers to increase the size of smaller ones by making them drink the milk of beasts."<sup>1</sup>

1 Jonaraja; *Dvitiya Rajatarangini*, (ed. Peterson), 30 sqq.

After his death in c. 1180 A.D., his brother, JASSAKA, who was a greater fool, wore the crown. This enabled the Damara Lavanyas, the overbearing barons, to flout the royal authority with ease and indulge in acts of brigandage. In fact, Jassaka, who was not keen to occupy the throne, was retained there by these rapacious landlords who thus got a golden opportunity to exploit the land. Two clever Brahman brothers named Kshuksa and Bhima, fishing in troubled waters, secured for themselves positions of power and it was only the fear of the Damara barons which prevented them from capturing the throne.

Jassaka's rule of eighteen years ended with his death in 1198 A.D. JAGADEVA who succeeded him seems to have been an enlightened despot, who tried to rid the land of the ravages of the Damaras and give the people a clean administration. The Kayastha officials who naturally disliked his policy of reform, rose in a body and with the help of the powerful barons forced the king to quit the Valley. Jagadeva, however, regained the throne with the help and advice of his faithful minister, Gunakara-rahula, but after a shaky rule of over fourteen years, he died in 1212 A.D. of poison administered to him by Padma, the 'Lord of Marches'.

There followed a civil war again. RAJADEVA, the son of Jagadeva, who had fled to Kishtwar on the death of his father, was soon brought back to the Valley by the enemies of Padma. While Rajadeva was undergoing a siege in a fort laid by the forces of Padma, the latter was suddenly killed by a Candala and Rajadeva was anointed as the king by the Bhattas or Brahman corporation. But later suspecting them of an intrigue against him, Rajadeva ordered a general plunder of the community and "then was heard from among them the cry *Nabhattoham* (I am not a Bhatta)."<sup>1</sup>

But this did not bring him peace. The royal authority was seriously threatened by the Lavanya barons and one of them, Baladyacandra, occupied half of Srinagar, the king failing in dislodging him even from there. After a disturbed and inglorious rule of about twenty-two years Rajadeva died in 1235 A.D.

The throne then passed to his son SAMGRAMADEVA. He was a strong prince but his determination to crush the power of the barons was frustrated by the activities of his brother Surya, who fleeing from the court raised a rebellion with the help of the barons Candra of Lar and Tunga of Hamal Parganas. After a bloody struggle the barons were overcome, but meanwhile the troubles gave an opportunity to the Brahmans under the leadership of the sons of Kalhana, to assert them-

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1 *Ibid.*, 79-91.



selves and become powerful again. They forced the king to retire and take shelter with the chief of Rajauri. Then followed a period of total anarchy with the Damaras 'sucking the very life-blood of the people.' For how long this anarchy remained we do not know, but ultimately Samgramadeva succeeded in defeating his adversaries and regaining the throne. He was not, however, destined to rule long. Kalhana's sons, whom he had desisted from killing because they were Brahmans, hatching a plot against him, murdered him in cold blood in 1252 A.D. Saka, a learned poet, is said to have composed a poem with Samgramadeva as its hero, which was, "like the necklace, an ornament of the learned." But the work is not now traceable.

Samgramadeva was succeeded by his son, RAMADEVA, whose first act as king was to avenge Samgramadeva's death by killing his murderers. He seems to have been an able administrator and governed the kingdom successfully with the help of his able minister, Prithviraj. His queen, Samudra, built a *matha* at Srinagar, on the banks of the Vitasta which was marked with her name, and the king himself repaired the Vishnu temple of Utpalapura.

The king had no issue and adopted LAKSHMANADEVA, a boy of Bhisyakapura, who succeeded him on his death in 1273 A.D. Lakshmanadeva was a learned man "filled with the love of the six branches of learning." But he did not have the vigour and courage of a Kshatriya and was defeated and killed by a Turuska (Turkish Muhammadan) named Kajjala in c. 1286 A.D.

His death seems to have resulted in a period of anarchy. Two figures, Samgramacandra the Damara lord of Lar and SIMHADEVA, the baron of Dakhinpara Parganas, appear as dominating the scene. The latter declared himself the king of Kashmir but his authority was at every step contested by Samgramacandra. It was only after the latter's death that Simhadeva was able to occupy the kingdom. He made a number of religious foundations which, taking into account the depleted condition of the treasury, do not seem to have been either extensive or substantial. During the later years of his life, he veered towards agnosticism and met his death as a result of his intrigue with the daughter of his nurse (1301 A.D.).

SAHADEVA (1301—1320), his brother, who succeeded him on his death, established his authority with the help of his minister Ramacandra. He led expeditions to such distant places outside the Valley as Panjgabhar on the east of Rajauri and brought the territory under his sway. Sahadeva's rule is notable for his giving shelter to two adventurers from abroad—Shahmira from Swat and Rinchin from Tibet—which

ultimately resulted in the overthrow of Hindu rule in Kashmir and its replacement by the Muslim kings of the Shahmiri dynasty.

#### THE FINAL PHASE

The history of medieval Kashmir, though sad, is remarkable in many ways. A glorious period of Kashmir's history almost ended with the reign of Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.). Earlier, the conquests of Lalitaditya (624-61 A.D.) and Jayapida (776-817 A.D.) led to an influx of wealth into the country which resulted in contentment and prosperity. The enlightened rule of Avantivarman consolidated these gains further and increased the material prosperity of the people, and this led to an upsurge in art, philosophy and literature. But this ease and plenty carried with it the germs of decay. Thus after Avantivarman's reign, incessant feuds, civil wars and upheavals became rampant. Death, famine and pestilence stalked the land. There were feudal wars between the kings and the Damaras and Lavanyas; temples were destroyed, cities and towns were burnt; crops were damaged and there was murder and loot. There were also popular risings; court intrigues and assassinations; and kings were installed and dethroned in quick succession.

A state divided against itself and resting on a shattered economy could not be expected to maintain the large territories annexed to it during the period of the early Karkotas. Pressed on all sides by the war-like tribes, the boundaries of the kingdom got shrunk, until the imbecile kings were content to rule over the precincts of the Valley alone, and sometimes even less. The Kabul valley, Rajauri and Poonch, Kangra and Jammu, Kishtwar and Ladakh had, one by one, thrown off their allegiance to the kings of Kashmir and became independent principalities. In mocking contrast to the power and prestige of the Karkotas, these petty chieftains now found opportunities to interfere directly in the affairs of the Valley, and even carry out, with impunity, marauding expeditions thereto. To fight their rivals, many Kashmir kings recruited soldiers from amongst the people of these principalities.

Kashmir therefore fell a prey to adventurers who made many attempts to reduce the Valley. But in times of such emergency, the people of Kashmir forgot their differences and rose to defend their country and for more than three centuries they withstood the onslaughts of many outside foes.

By the beginning of the 13th century A.D., Islam had made considerable progress in northern India and Central Asia, and though Kashmir had successfully withstood the attacks of Muslim conquerors like Ghazni, it was being gradually influenced by the preachings of

numerous Islamic teachers. By the time Sahadeva (1301-20 A.D.) ascended the throne of Kashmir, a fair proportion of the people had already accepted Islam.

A stirring drama of intrigue, rebellion and war lasting for twenty years (1318-38 A.D.) was enacted, and finally Muslim rule was established in Kashmir. The dominating personality during all these years was Queen Kota—a woman with an unbounded lust for power.

Sahadeva who was a weak-minded king was fortunate in having an able and kind-hearted prime minister and commander-in-chief, by name Ramacandra. He virtually ruled the land. He carried out his duties faithfully and tried to conserve the slender resources of the kingdom and maintain a semblance of ordered government of the country. He was ably assisted by his beautiful and intelligent daughter, Kota. But the overbearing barons, known as Kota (castle) Rajas, protected by their castles and holding rich tracts of land, consistently flouted his authority. In these circumstances, the king always looked out for aid.

At this time a fugitive prince named Rinchin came to Kashmir from Tibet with a following of several hundred armed men. There had been a civil war in Tibet and the Kalmanya Bhuteas had treacherously killed the ruler of western Tibet along with his relations and friends. Rinchin, who was a prince of the royal line, however, escaped a similar fate. Collecting all the scattered forces, he dealt several heavy blows to his enemies, but being outnumbered he was forced to flee. He crossed the Zoji-la and sought Ramacandra's protection. As Ramacandra was badly in need of an ally, he readily took Rinchin and his followers into his service. Kota, who managed her father's affairs thus came into close contact with the prince who helped her in her untiring efforts to alleviate the suffering of the people. They also helped Ramacandra in consolidating the power of the king.

They were joined by another protege of Ramacandra, Shah Mir. He was a Muslim adventurer from Swat and in pursuance of a dream in which he had been told by a holy man that he would succeed to the throne of Kashmir, he had come to the Valley "together with his relatives. The king of Kashmir greatly favoured him by giving him a salary, even as the mango tree favours the black bees."

But at this time Kashmir was attacked by Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Central Asia. Instead of opposing the enemy, Sahadeva fled to Kishtwar leaving Ramacandra to manage the affairs of the State. Impoverishing the Valley during a stay of eight months, Dulchu finding that provisions were scarce, tried to return through the passes leading



to the plains of India. But he could not escape Nature's wrath. Caught in a snow storm, he perished together with thousands of prisoners he had taken. Then the *Gaddis* from Kishtwar led a marauding expedition into the Valley but were driven back by RAMACANDRA who now assumed the title of king.

Pitiable was the condition of the people at this time. Laments the Chronicler: "When Dulchu had left the place, those people of Kashmir who had escaped capture, issued out of their strongholds, as mice do out of their holes. When the violence caused by the Rakshasa Dulchu ceased, the son found not his father nor the father his son, nor did brother meet his brother. Kashmir became almost like a region before the creation, a vast field with men without food and full of grass."<sup>1</sup>

During these dark days Kota played a prominent part in organising resistance to the enemy. After her father assumed the formal kingship of Kashmir, she did her utmost to give succour and relief to the afflicted people. Rinchin had already gained popularity among the Kashmiris as a result of the prominent part he had played against the enemy.

Rinchin in his turn became ambitious and he grew envious of Ramacandra's accession to the throne. At an opportune moment his followers rose in revolt and took the royal army by surprise. Ramacandra managed to escape and the capital fell into the hands of Rinchin without much difficulty. Ramacandra and his daughter Kota took refuge in the strong fort of Lahara (Lar Pargana) where he began to reorganise his forces for battle against Rinchin.

But he had to contend with a foe who was at once brave and crafty. Realizing that he had little chance against Ramacandra in open combat, Rinchin resorted to a mean stratagem. He sent his Tibetan followers into the inner precincts of the Lahara fortress disguised as simple pedlars but with arms concealed under their long robes. When all suspicion had been removed, his men attacked Ramacandra's quarter and murdered him in cold blood before his guards could come to his help. Simultaneously Rinchin's forces launched an assault on the fort and encountering no resistance, planted their flag on its ramparts.

RINCHIN now became the undisputed master of Kashmir. But, he realized that through his base action he had forfeited Kota's love. Thereupon he set himself to the task of courting her. He gained the goodwill of her brother whom he appointed as his minister. At last her grief was assuaged.

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1 Jonaraja, *Ibid.*, 152-155.

Rinchin still followed the Lamaist religion. But Kota Rani urged him to adopt Hinduism. However, he failed to get into the Hindu fold and embraced Islam. He thus became the first Muslim king of Kashmir.

Rinchin, with the help of his queen, Kota Rani, wisely and justly conducted the affairs of State. He broke the power of the feudal barons, introduced order and discipline to his disgruntled and disorganised army and reorganised the administrative machinery. He was faithfully served by his minister, Shah Mir, a fellow refugee who had taken service under Ramacandra. Shah Mir was also gaining popularity among the Kashmiris because of his abilities and his sympathy with and understanding of the grievances of the people.

Though Rinchin succeeded in a large measure in subduing his opponents, he could not escape the machinations of his enemies abroad. Sahadeva's brother, Udyanadeva, had also fled the country at the time of Dulchu's invasion. He had taken refuge with the chief of Gandhara. Enraged at Rinchin's usurpation of the throne, he organised a rising in Kashmir under a powerful baron by name Tukka. The rebels launched an attack on the king's palace. In the skirmish that followed, Rinchin received a strong blow on the head as a result of which he fainted. Believing him to be dead the unruly elements spread disorder in the city, but Rinchin regained his consciousness and chased the enemy away. He inflicted severe punishment on all those who had taken part in the uprising and generously rewarded those who had remained loyal.

But his wounds became worse despite all possible treatment and care. Knowing that his end was near, he entrusted his son, Haider, and his queen, Kota Rani, to the care of his faithful minister, Shah Mir. He died in 1320 A.D., after having ruled for three years.

Kashmir was again thrown into disorder. Though Rinchin had given the semblance of peace, he had not succeeded in completely suppressing the disorderly elements which raised their head again after his death. Kota Rani realized that she could not hold the country with her slender resources. Therefore, when Udyanadeva was advancing upon Kashmir with a strong force, she offered him the throne as well as her person, waiving the claims of her son, Haider. UDYANADEVA on ascending the *gaddi* married Kota Rani with great pomp.

By her charm, beauty and intelligence, Kota Rani quickly gained ascendancy over the king, whom she, in a short time, relegated to the background. From now onwards she was the virtual ruler of the kingdom.

## KOTA RANI—THE LAST HINDU RULER

It was at this time that Kashmir was threatened with an invasion by Achala. Udyanadeva like his brother Sahadeva, sought safety in flight. But Kota Rani decided to resist the invader. She mustered together all the available forces, and warned the people that if they did not rise to the occasion, a worse fate than that which befell them at Dulchu's hands would overtake them now. Encouraged by her undaunted courage and forgetting all their differences at the approach of common danger, they flocked under her banner. She organised a strong resistance and Shah Mir remained loyal to her. Kota Rani realizing her shortcomings against Achala, took recourse to diplomacy. Feigning submission, she sent word to him that as the throne of Kashmir had fallen vacant due to the king's flight, she and her ministers would install him on the throne provided his army withdrew. Achala, blinded by greed, believed her and keeping only a small detachment with him in Kashmir, sent the rest of his troops back to their home. Then Kota broke her word, attacked and destroyed the detachment and capturing Achala, had him beheaded. At once Kota became the idol of the people. Learning of Kota Rani's success against the invader, Udyanadeva returned to the capital and notwithstanding his betrayal of the country at a critical moment, "Kota respectfully received him with her head bent down, even as the eastern hill received the gloom-dispelling full moon on its head."

Kota Rani was now the undisputed master of the kingdom. She held her court personally, dispensed justice, appointed and dismissed her ministers. But with all her qualities of a born ruler, she could not stop the rot that had already worked deep into the body-politic of Kashmir. Powerful factions were constantly intriguing against her. Often she had to resort to force to curb her rebellious ministers and warlords. Once while leading a force against her turbulent commander-in-chief, she was skilfully manoeuvred into a fortress, captured and imprisoned. It was, however, the sagacity and shrewdness of one of her loyal ministers, Kumara Bhatta, that secured her freedom. Reaching her capital she organised a stronger force with which she finally defeated her rebel commander.

All this time Shah Mir was cleverly taking stock of the situation. Being a shrewd politician, he was biding his time to seize the throne without raising any opposition from the people or the powerful barons. He had already endeared himself to the people by his bravery during Dulchu's and Achala's invasions. He had won the esteem and trust of the queen by his loyalty. Being the guardian of her son, Haider, he proved to be a terror to Udyanadeva and "frightened the king day and



night by holding up the boy before him, even as one frightens a bird by holding up his hawk". He established alliances with the barons through the marriage of his children and grand-children into their families. With the help of these powerful relations he took possession of large estates which he controlled without any interference from the king or the queen. With a steady eye on his goal, he had been consolidating his position and bided his time.

These actions roused the suspicions of Kota Rani who had planned to continue in power even after her husband's death. She had appointed a clever and astute politician, Bikhsana Bhatta, as her second minister and had entrusted to him the guardianship of her son by Udyanadeva.

While these intrigues and counter-intrigues were going on, King Udyanadeva died on the Shivratri night in 1338 A.D.

Fearing an open revolt by Shah Mir and his relations, Kota Rani kept the death of her husband a secret for four days. During this interval she made quick but efficient arrangements for the protection of her kingdom and, in order to checkmate Shah Mir, she publicly disowned her son, Haider, who had been brought up by Shah Mir and who, she feared, might be proclaimed king. Having at first won the loyalty of the powerful Lavanya tribe, she ascended the throne. Shah Mir and others, finding their plans thwarted, "bowed to her as to the crescent of the moon".

But she enjoyed no peace although she did her best to please her subjects by "bestowing much wealth on them". She was afraid of Shah Mir who was her rival to the throne. She, therefore bestowed honours on Bikhsana Bhatta.

Shah Mir, however, was not slow in perceiving the queen's designs. He realized that, as a first step to power, he had to remove Bikhsana who was the mainstay of her power. He, therefore, took recourse to a base stratagem.

Shah Mir pretended to be very ill and had it known that his end was near. Kota Rani sent Bikhsana Bhatta to enquire about his health. When he arrived at his residence followed by his body-guard, Shah Mir's servants engaged Bikhsana's followers in conversation and Bikhsana, unattended, was conducted into the 'patient's' room. Shah Mir at first complained, spoke of his illness and then suddenly jumped out of his bed and with his sword killed Bikhsana. When news of this treacherous deed reached Kota Rani she was enraged, but was dissuaded by her ministers from seeking revenge.

From then on, Shah Mir gained in prestige. Only after five months of her accession to the throne, an insurrection broke out in the Kamraj district and the queen went to the chief town and fortress of the district, Jayapura (modern Andarkot), to direct operations personally. No sooner had she left Srinagar than Shah Mir at the head of a strong contingent of his followers captured the city and proclaimed himself king. The Lavanyas quickly organised themselves into a force and launched a strong attack on his followers. Kota Rani learning of Shah Mir's rebellion also mustered a strong army at Jayapura.

For a month there raged a fierce and sanguinary battle between the forces of Shah Mir and the Lavanya tribe. Shah Mir was hard pressed and step by step was being driven out of the city. He sent emissaries to his feudal relatives and implored them for help. When victory was in sight for the Lavanyas, the forces of Lutsa, the Lord of the Marches and a relation of Shah Mir, attacked them from the rear. Shah Mir also launched a strong counter offensive from the front, and thus surrounded the Lavanyas. Elated at this victory, Shah Mir threw open the doors of the treasury and handsomely rewarded those who had stood by him. Learning of this sudden turn in the battle, Kota Rani ordered the gates of the fort of Jayapura to be shut and made preparations for facing a long siege.

The fort was situated in the middle of a lake. The town was on the shore of the lake opposite the fort. Both could therefore be held by even a small garrison against a large army. And in the case of Shah Mir a long siege was fatal, since his position was contested from all sides. Being a shrewd politician, he realized that the conflict had to end in a short time.

He knew Kota Rani's weakness for power. It was for power that she had married Rinchin, the murderer of her father; for power she had disowned her son; and for power she had remarried Udyanadeva.

With her brave followers, the Lavanyas, defeated and she herself surrounded by the powerful forces of Shah Mir, Kota Rani fell a victim to Shah Mir's assiduity and surrendered on the explicit condition that she would share the bed and the throne with him. And so Shah Mir "took possession of the *kota* (castle) and of queen Kota".

After coming under his power she realized that she would not get a fair deal. Shorn of her dignity, she seemed destined to be a forgotten and forlorn woman. SHAH MIR, sent word to her to present herself before him. Clad in the richest costume and wearing her most precious ornaments, she entered his bed chamber. Triumphantly Shah Mir approached her, but before he could draw her into his arms, Kota Rani had stabbed herself to death.

Thus ended the life of one of the most romantic figures in the history of Kashmir. There can be no two opinions about the character and abilities of this remarkable woman. That she was a born diplomat nobody can deny. It was due to her clever moves that Achala was killed and his invasion halted. Considering the ferocious nature of the feudal landlords of her time and the indiscipline among her troops, it required all her intelligence, force of character and administrative ability to govern the kingdom so well. She was a source of inspiration to Rinchin and later to Udyanadeva. But at the same time we cannot ignore her fickle-minded policies and her divided loyalties at a time when the fortunes of the kingdom stood at crossroads.

### HINDU RULE—AN APPRAISAL

With Kota Rani's death we come to the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir. It is not difficult to account for its fall. During the latter half of the ninth century and onwards, the rulers of Kashmir adopted a policy of strict isolation of the Valley from the rest of India. It was no doubt dictated by the rise of Islamic power in north-west India and although Kashmir preserved its independence, protected by its inaccessible mountain barriers, the people had to pay a heavy price for it in their long sufferings and pitiless oppression.

For, the one striking fact about the history of Kashmir is that its people rose to great heights of art, culture and economic prosperity when it received the impulses from outside rather than from within—from India direct, from Indo-Greeks and Indo-Scythians. Ashoka's sovereign power extended to Kashmir and the results of its influence may be seen to this day in the remains of Buddhist temples and statues and of the city founded by him 250 years before Christ. The great emperor had established a friendly intercourse with Greece and Egypt and it is to this connection that we owe the splendid stone architecture and sculpture of Kashmir.

The next landmark is the reign of Kanishka, whose territories extended from Central Asia to Bengal. Renowned throughout the Buddhist world as the pious king who held the Buddhist Council in Kashmir, the contacts established under his rule with outside world and the rise of Mahayana resulted in intense cultural and religious activity of the people of Kashmir whose sons carried the doctrine to distant places in Central Asia and China.

And so also during the days of Lalitaditya and his immediate successors, when though the tide of political influence and conquest was turned, Kashmir was brought in close contact with the rest of India. The only difference was that instead of more advanced and powerful



races from India spreading their influence over Kashmir, it was from Kashmir that conquerors were to go forth over neighbouring districts of the Punjab and northern and western India. Lalitaditya is the most conspicuous figure in the early history of Kashmir and raised his country to a pitch of glory it had never reached before. His grandson also carried on in his foot-steps, but a succession of weak rulers resulted in the fall of the dynasty and its empire. Under Avantivarman, we witness a period of consolidation and though his son Samkaravarman tried to emulate the great deeds of Karkota kings, he met with dismal failure. This was the last outward effort of the Kashmir rulers who, to save their small kingdom from conquest by the new Muslim kings of North India, sealed the passes and behind the protecting walls of high mountains reduced the people of Kashmir to the plight of a beleaguered garrison.

But the resources of the small kingdom were too poor to maintain a large population. Connections with the centres of trade and commerce in India being severed, the pressure on agricultural land increased, resulting in the emergence of powerful landlords. Kashmir thus presents the picture of a besieged fortress which when its provisions get exhausted becomes the scene of unrest and mutiny among the garrison itself.

So we find the frustrated rulers of Kashmir with their traditions of splendour and power taking recourse to the imposition of numerous taxes and exactions to meet the expenses of a pompous court and a large standing army. And when even this proved insufficient they turned their attention to temples and their endowments, sparing not even the sacred gold, silver and copper statues of gods and goddesses which they melted for purposes of coinage. The kingdom thus fell into a vicious circle. The masses being reduced to poverty the State revenues dwindled, resulting in fresh taxation and more misery. The soldiers deserted the king's army and took service under the powerful barons or organised themselves into bands of armed condottiere offering their services to one or the other of the numerous claimants to the throne.

No wonder we witness intrigues, rebellions, murders and quick successions of kings. The fate of the kingdom was dependent upon the character of the sovereign and there was little of political consciousness among the people. They patiently endured the despotic whims of the ruler and although we find many rebellions taking place, these were mostly raised by feudal landlords for their class interests.

Added to the instability of the administration was the evil influence of the harem on the king and his court. The incredible sensuality

of the kings and queens which brought untold sufferings upon the State, throws a lurid light on the manners and customs of the age and gives a rude shock to the fond illusion of benevolent despotism of our ancient rulers. Similarly, we find a lack of character among the officials. Among the crowd of those painted by Kalhana, we rarely come across one who showed steadfast loyalty, stern morality, a deep sense of duty or even an appreciation of ordinary moral rules.

While this sad drama was being enacted in the close confines of Kashmir, Islam was entrenching itself in north-west India and in spite of its seclusion and closure of its passes, the new ideas were imperceptibly penetrating into the Valley. By the beginning of the twelfth century A.D., Islam was slowly accepted by the harassed people. It is not therefore surprising that Shah Mir had local supporters and could ascend the throne and hold it without the aid of an outside army or ally.

This is another illustration of a unique characteristic of the people of Kashmir. In the course of their long history they have practically demonstrated their religious tolerance and respect for the beliefs of others. When for instance Naga worship was replaced by the early Brahmanical religion which later gave place to Buddhism, there was the least tinge of violence or ill-feeling. And when finally Buddhism was again supplanted by the reformed Brahmanical creed, the change was brought about imperceptibly and without any outburst of violence. In fact we find kings, queens and courtiers not only building and endowing Hindu temples and Buddhist *viharas* and *caityas*, but worshipping in all. Saivism and Vaishnavism flourished side by side, and received equal homage from the king and the commoner. And so also Islam which entered the Valley imperceptibly did not meet with violent opposition. For two centuries after the accession of the first Muslim king to the throne of Kashmir, the administration was carried on by the traditional Brahman class with Sanskrit as the court language.

Another notable feature of Kashmir history is the administrative ability displayed by the queens. Though unfortunately in most cases it is accompanied by dissolute character, still the careers of Sugandha, Didda, Suryamati and Kota and a host of minor ones, throw interesting light on the opportunities afforded to women to take effective part in public life. There are examples of justice and good administration. The benevolent and peaceful reigns of kings like Candrapida, Avantivarman and Yasaskara show the value placed by the kings on high morals, truth and selfless service to the people placed in their care.

But Kashmir was generally unfortunate in its rulers and the people had to endure unspeakable miseries at the hands of several tyrants. Kalhana presents gruesome pictures of kings and queens who gloried in shameless lust, fiendish cruelty and pitiless misrule. But "although in political development and barbarous cruelty the people of Kashmir may very well be likened to the Europeans in the Middle Ages, still, in refinement, culture and all that go to make up civilizations, they were in a far more advanced stage. Learning flourished and was very much appreciated in the country. Fine arts like music and dance were cultivated by the king and people alike. Art and architecture greatly prospered, and even the worst kings and their officials continued the pious practice of building temples and monasteries. In religion and philosophy, Kashmir showed remarkable progress and evolved a new school of Saivism, whose humanity and rationality is in strange contrast to the horrible and ghastly picture of many Saiva sects that preceded it."<sup>1</sup>

A treatment of these and similar features of Kashmir history would fill a volume. Here we will attempt to give only a brief account of the life and culture of the people of Kashmir during the period we have so far reviewed.

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<sup>1</sup> R.C. Majumdar, *Ancient India*, p. 585.



## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

STIRRING BUT SAD though it reads, the political history of Kashmir from early times to the middle of the fourteenth century A.D. yet appears airy and unreal. In the absence of information on the life and condition of the people who inhabited the kingdom during these centuries, and who were affected by, and in turn determined, the course of history, the narration of the activities of kings and queens and of their court, reads like a fairytale. Unfortunately very little data is available on this important aspect of history. We have to fall back upon the few references to, and sidelights thrown on, the social and economic condition of the people by Kalhana in his *Rajatarangini*. The *Nilamatpurana* and the works of Kshemendra and Jonaraja are also helpful. After carefully joining together the scanty material that we have at our disposal, it is possible to give only a broad outline of the life of the people who passed to and for over this beautiful land in ancient times.

#### POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The extent of the area of Kashmir that will be covered by this survey, will naturally be confined to the Valley proper. For, though at times the kingdom extended to as far as Kanauj in the south and Tibet in the north, our information is neither detailed nor authentic about these places. There was, of course, a close resemblance to political institutions, social classes, military organisation and trade and commerce prevailing in the rest of India, of which Kashmir from ancient times was a part; yet since the information vouchsafed us by Kalhana and other authors is limited to the Valley proper we have perforce to content ourselves with its narrow geographical limits. It will therefore be useful to give a brief notice of the territories which lay beyond the confines of the Valley and which formed its neighbours during the Hindu times.

Beginning in the south-east we have the valley of Kashtvatta, the present Kishtwar, on the upper Chenab. It is mentioned by Kalhana as a separate hill state in the times of Kalasa.<sup>1</sup> Its Rajas who were Hindu till Aurangzeb's time, practically retained their independence

<sup>1</sup> *Raj.*, vii—590.

up to the beginning of the 19th century. The hill district of Bhadrawah lower down on the Chenab had also its Rajas who were till recent times tributary to Chamba.

The Rajas of Chamba, ancient Campa, figure often in the Kashmir Chronicles. Their territory has since early times comprised the valleys of the sources of the Ravi between Kangra, the ancient Trigarta, and Kashtvata. The ancient Rajput family which ruled this hill state often intermarried with the Lohara dynasty which reigned in Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

To the west of Chamba lay the old chiefship of Vallapura, modern Bilawar. Its rulers are repeatedly referred to in Kalhana's narrative. They retained their independence as petty hill chiefs till the rise of Gulab Singh in the 19th century.

Of the political organisation of the territory between Vallapura in the south-east and Rajauri in the north-west, we have no distinct information. The inhabitants of this region are the Dogras, a name traditionally derived from Dvigarta.

Immediately at the foot of the Banihal pass is the territory known in ancient times as Visalata. Temporarily these hill states acknowledged the suzerainty of Kashmir, but during the greater part of the period they appear to have held their own and rather to have obtained subsidies from the Kashmir rulers.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these petty hill states were perhaps included in the territories known as Darvabhisara, comprising the whole tract of the lower and middle hills between the Jhelum and the Chenab. The combined names of the Darvas and Abhisaras are found already in the ethnographical lists of the *Mahabharata* and *Brihatsamhita*. A chief of this region figures under the ethnic name of Abhisares in the accounts of Alexander's Indian campaign.

The most important of the hill states in this region is Rajapuri, modern Rajauri. Owing to its position on the direct route to the Punjab, Rajauri was necessarily often brought into political relations with Kashmir. Heun Tsiang mentions this hill state to be a part of the territories of the Kashmir king in his time. From the tenth century onwards we find the Rajas of this principality practically independent rulers, though we learn of numerous expeditions undertaken to this state by the later Kashmir kings. The ruling family belonged to the Khasha tribe.<sup>3</sup>

1 *Ibid.* vii—218.

2 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 432.

3 *Ibid.*

On the north-west, Rajauri was adjoined by the territory of Lohara, the chief valley of which is now known as Lohrin. Lohara became important for Kashmir from the end of the tenth century onwards when a branch of its ruling family obtained the Kashmir throne. Subsequently this branch succeeded to Lohara which was united with Kashmir under the same ruler. The chiefs of this family are mentioned to have belonged to the Khasha tribe. As the ancestral home of the rulers, Lohara obtained an important position during the rule of later kings of Kashmir. Lohara seems to have included the principality of Poonch, ancient Paranotsa, which in Heun Tsiang's time formed a part of the kingdom of Kashmir. Being on the direct route to the Western Punjab, Poonch is often mentioned in the Chronicles. It is possible that the hill state of Kalinjara, which is repeatedly mentioned by Kalhana, lay in this direction.

To the north-west of Poonch is the valley of the Vitasta. From ancient times it was held by the Kashmir kings as an outlying frontier district as far down as Bolyasaka, present Buliaşa. Further down the valley up to Muzaffarabad the territory was held by fierce Khakha and Bomba tribes, who were subjugated by Gulab Singh only in the last century. This tract was known in ancient times as Dvarvati from which its modern designation of Dvarbidi has been derived.

Further to the west beyond Muzaffarabad lay the ancient kingdom of Urusa, now known as the district of Hazara. Its ruler figures as Arsakes in the accounts of Alexander's campaign. Heun Tsiang while coming to the Valley from the district found it a tributary of Kashmir. We find Urusa often mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*. The account of Samkaravarman's ill-fated expedition to Urusa furnishes us a clue as to the location of its capital then, which may have been near about the town of Abbotabad.<sup>1</sup>

The tract now known as Karnah in the Kishenganga valley bore the old name of Karnaha and was a small chiefship tributary to Kashmir. Drava, the tract above the junction of the Kishenganga river with the Karnah stream, included the famous shrine of Sarada, so often mentioned in the Chronicles and was a feudal stronghold in the later history of this period. The upper Indus valley to which a route lay from Sarada seems to have been, however, outside the sphere of Kashmir political influence, hence we have no mention of any ancient name of the tract in the Chronicles.

Immediately above Sarada lies the territory known as Dardistan, or Dardadesa of the *Rajatarangini*. Its rulers who bore Hindu names

<sup>1</sup> *Raj* ; v-217.



more than once attempted invasions of the Valley. Daratpuri, 'the town of the Darads', may have occupied the position of modern Gurez. The 'Malechha' chiefs who on two occasions figure as the Dard Rajas' allies in Kalhana's work, were perhaps rulers of other Dard tribes further towards the Indus who had earlier been converted to Islam.<sup>1</sup>

Crossing over from the headwaters of the Kishenganga river to those of the Dras river, we reach the Ladakh district, the land of the Bhauttas of the *Rajatarangini*. There are, however, very few references to these territories to enable us to form an idea of their political organisation and though the Valley suffered a lot from invasions from this side in the concluding years of the Hindu rule, even Jonaraja and Srivara, the later Chroniclers do not supply us with any information. Srivara, however, seems to have known the "Little and the Great Bhautta-land", a reference to Baltistan and Ladakh.<sup>2</sup>

The eastern frontier of the Valley is formed by a mountain range which runs from the Zoji-la almost due south to Kishtwar. Along this range on the east lies a long narrow valley known in Kashmiri as Mariv-Wadwan. Its high elevation and rigorous climate are responsible for its scanty population which is entirely Kashmiri. We have no mention of this tract in the *Rajatarangini* and it is doubtful if this belonged to the Kashmir kingdom under the Hindu rulers. Beyond it to the east stretches the belt of high mountains and glaciers, and to its south we reach once more the tract of Kishtwar.

#### TOWNS AND CITIES

As regards the internal condition of the Valley it was materially different from what it is today. Though the location of cities, towns and villages has changed but little, yet their importance as centres of trade or the seat of government varied from time to time. At present several of these once famous places are no more than insignificant villages.

According to Greek and Roman historians Kaspatyros was a city of Gandharians. Most probably it refers to the capital of Kashmir, which from ancient times had been known to foreigners by the same name as the kingdom. According to Kalhana, Ashoka built the city of Srinagar which up to the sixth century A.D. was the capital of the Valley.<sup>3</sup> Pravarasena II built his city Pravarasenagar at the site occupied by the present Srinagar and moved the royal headquarters

1 *Raj*; viii 2762.

2 Srivara, *Rajvalipataka*, II-96.

3 *Raj*; i-104.

to it. Heun Tsiang definitely mentions it as the 'new city' in contradistinction to the 'old capital', Puranadhisthana, modern Pandrenthan.

The history of Srinagar is as interesting as that of the Valley. It was destroyed by fire several times and rebuilt. The houses were mainly constructed of timber then as now. Kalhana mentions in several places the splendour of its markets, gardens and lofty houses. There were no permanent bridges during the Hindu rule, but the river was spanned by a number of boat bridges. The *Rajdhani* or palace of the Hindu rulers was most probably located just below the second bridge (Habba Kadal) on the left bank of the river. With its landmarks of the Hari Parbat and Sankaracarya hills, the city was dotted with richly endowed stone temples, traces of which can still be found in sculptured blocks, pillars and images in the walls and embankments.<sup>1</sup> Kalhana also mentions the *ghats* and the bathing houses of the city. Bilhana found the city equally charming and surpassing in beauty all other cities. "For its coolness in summer and for the beauty of its grooves", says he, "even those who have reached the garden of the celestials could not forget it."<sup>2</sup>

We have a mention of the foundation of three important cities by the Kushan rulers, Kanishka, **Jushka** and **Huvishka**. The memory of these cities still lives in their names. Kanishkapura, Huvishkapura and Jushkapura, are identified with the villages of Kaneshpura situated between the Vitasta and the Baramula—Srinagar highway; Ushkur, two miles to the south-east of the present town of Baramula ; and Zukur, five miles to the north-east of Srinagar.<sup>3</sup> Of these three cities Huvishkapura has been often mentioned in the Chronicle and seems to have retained its importance for a long time as the headquarters of the Buddhist monks and also as the first town of note in the Valley on its entrance from the Jhelum valley route. Heun Tsiang stopped here after passing the ancient gate of Baramula. It is mentioned by Alberuni who gives its exact location.<sup>4</sup> Ruins of an ancient *vihara* and a *stupa* have been found near the village as also a large number of terra-cotta figures.

We have a mention of a town founded by Abhimanyu which is supposed to have been located at Bemyun near Srinagar. King Nara's town, Kimnarapura,<sup>5</sup> mentioned by Kalhana in connection with the

1 Stein, Trs, of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, pp. 100-102, footnotes.

2 *Vikram*, XVIII, 15, 16, 18.

3 *Raj.*, i-168.

4 *India*, trans. Sachau. i, p. 207.

5 *Raj.*, i-274.

legend of Susravas Naga, and situated near the modern town of Bijbihara, was supposed to have been a flourishing city with its markets full of fruits and vegetables and its *ghats* buzzing with loading and unloading operations of merchandise. It had lofty houses, parks and cool springs and 'surpassed even Kubera's town by the riches amassed there'. But the wicked deeds of its founder, King Nara, brought on it the wrath of the Nagas and it was destroyed by them by lightening and fire.

Near about Nara's city we have the town of Vijayeswara built round the famous shrine of Siva Vijayesa by King Vijaya.<sup>1</sup> The city figures prominently in the Chronicles as the refuge of King Ananta and also as the headquarters of the powerful Damaras of the southern district of the Valley. The temple which was surrounded by a high wall was set on fire by Ananta's son, Kalasa, and later by Bhiksacara. It was here that several decisive battles were fought during the civil war between the later Lohara kings and the several pretenders to the throne. About the middle of the seventh century A. D., Pratapaditya II, founded the town called Pratapapura which has been identified with the present Tapar. Excavations conducted there recently have unearthed the foundations of an old stone temple, but no indication is found of the poetic assertion of Kalhana of its rivalling the city of Indra in splendour.

Lalitaditya's capital city of Parihaspura<sup>1</sup> which he took pains to build on a lavish scale, is now nothing but a desolate plain with the scattered ruins lying about in confusion. As already mentioned, the city was systematically destroyed by successive kings who robbed it of building materials and objects of art. Parihaspura lost its importance by these vandalistic acts and also as a result of the flood protection measures taken by Suyya, the engineer of Avantivarman, which changed the course of the Vitasta that had been flowing by it till then.

Lalitaditya's grandson, Jayapida, built a city called Jayapura which has been identified with the present village of Andarkot. Situated on an island rising from the Sumbal lake, the fortified city was the scene of the drama which saw the end of Hindu rule in Kashmir in the fourteenth century. But except a few hamlets there is no trace to be found of this 'splendid town'.

The present town of Pampur (ancient Padmapura) famous for its saffron cultivation, was founded in the first quarter of the ninth century

1 *Ibid.*, ii-62.

2 For the position of the ruins and their identification with Lalitaditya's foundations, see *Raj.*, trans. by Stein, Vol. II, pp. 301-2.



by Padma, the maternal uncle of Cippatajayapida. Due to its central position in the Valley, the town grew in importance and thus finds a frequent mention in the *Rajatarangini*.

The city of Avantivarman, marked by the modern town of Avantipura, stood on a high and dry spur of the Wastarwan hills, on the right bank of the Vitasta.<sup>1</sup> Owing to its central and strategic location in the Valley, the town has been of considerable importance since the date of its foundation, and hence is often mentioned in the *Samayamatrika* of Kshemendra and in the *Chronicles* of Kalhana, Jonaraja and Srivara. The large number of ruins extending up to the hills to the east of the present Avantipura town, shows that in former times it used to cover a large area. Among the ruins can be recognised the remains of the two old temples of Siva Avantesvara and Vishnu Avantisvamin.

The important town of Surapura, present Hurapur, the first stage from the Valley on the old Mughal Road over the Pir Panjal Pass, was founded by Sura, Avantivarman's able minister.<sup>2</sup> From Kalhana's mention of the transfer of the watch-station and fort on the Pass to the new town and from his other statements, it is evident that Surapura was a centre of trade in early days and commanded a strategic importance.

Another important town founded during Avantivarman's reign was that of Suyyapura by Suyya.<sup>3</sup> Identified with the present Sopore, the town situated on the Vitasta immediately where she leaves the Wular Lake, Suyyapura became a centre of trade in the north of the Valley.

Avantivarman's son, Samkaravarman, founded the city of Samkarapura, which is identified with Pattan, seventeen miles below Srinagar on the Baramula road.<sup>4</sup> To build the city, Samkaravarman used the material of Parihaspura, Lalitaditya's capital. The temples of Samkaragaurisa and Sugandesha built by the king can be identified by their ruins at Pattan. Samkarapura did not, however, rise to significance due to the unpopularity of its founder. But it remained for a long time the centre of woollen manufactures and trade in cattle.

Queen Didda founded two towns, Abhimanyapura and Kankanapura. The former is not traceable and the latter may perhaps be marked by the present village of Kangan, seventeen miles from Srinagar on the road to Sonemarg.

1 *Raj.*, v—44.

2 *Ibid.*, v—39.

3 *Ibid.*, v—118.

4 *Raj.*, v—156.

## ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

The Valley of Kashmir has from early times been divided into two great parts, known by the modern names of Kamraz and Maraz, *Sans*. Kramarajya and Madavarajya. We find a frequent reference to these in Kalhana's and later Chronicles. According to the prevailing notions Kamraz comprises the part of the Valley below Srinagar on both sides of the Vitasta and Maraz the rest of the Valley above Srinagar. That the boundary of these two divisions was already in old times indicated by a line drawn through the capital is proved by a close examination of the Chronicle.<sup>1</sup>

These two divisions have from early times been further subdivided into a number of small districts known at present 'Parganas' but designated in old times as 'Visaya'. The number, names and limits of these sub-divisions have been subject to considerable variations during the Hindu period. The great majority of Parganas as detailed by Abul Fazal in the *Ain-i-Akbari* and known in the Valley even now, can be safely assumed to have already existed during Hindu rule. This is proved by the fact that the names of several Parganas are found in their ancient forms in the *Rajatarangini* and the later Chronicles. But since these texts do not furnish us with a complete list of the Visayas, it is difficult to draw an accurate map of the administrative subdivisions of the Valley in ancient times. Abul Fazal, however, furnishes us a list of thirty-eight Parganas, and Bates who prepared the latest list puts their number as forty-three during the last century. This shows that though there have been some variations in the number and constitution of Parganas from time to time, the main divisions and sub-divisions of the Valley remained intact from early Hindu rule to the present day.

## NUMBER OF PEOPLE

There is unfortunately no record of the number of people inhabiting the Valley during any period of the Hindu rule. But the large number of administrative sub-divisions which goes back to an early date, may be taken as an indication of the dense population of the Valley. There is every reason to believe that even at a later period it was fairly large. The existence of a large number of village sites in all parts of the Valley, remains of an extensive system of irrigation, the number of temple ruins and the uniform tradition of the people—all point to the same conclusion.

The fact of Kashmir having a far greater population in ancient

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1 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 560.

times helps to explain the curious traditional verse which puts the number of villages in Kashmir at 66,063. The verse is found twice in *Lokaprakasa* and has been alluded to in Jonaraja's Chronicle. Though that figure must have at all times implied a considerable exaggeration, it is nevertheless characteristic of the popular notion on the subject. Even Sharif-ud-din whose information, collected about A.D. 1400, is on the whole accurate, records : "It is popularly believed that in the whole of the province—plains and mountains together—are comprised 100,000 villages. The land is thickly populated."<sup>1</sup> It is curious that Mirza Haider, who had ruled Kashmir himself, copies this statement without modification or dissent.

#### CLASSES OF POPULATION

A close study of the *Rajatarangini* shows that the population of Kashmir in early times comprised several castes, among which Brahmins, Vaisyas, Sudras, Nisadas, Kiratas are frequently mentioned. The Rajputs or Rajaputras are associated with the fighting and the ruling caste. The Tantrins, Ekangas and Lavanyas seem to have been tribes of professional soldiers who in later times formed into formidable condottiere and became virtually king-makers. There is, however, no well-defined caste system mentioned either by Kshemendra or Kalhana. The reason is not far to seek. Buddhism which was introduced into Kashmir by Ashoka and subsequently flourished under the Kushans, had been accepted by the masses and was for a number of centuries the dominant faith in the Valley. Caste system hence had lost all rigidity and except for the Brahmins who maintained their traditions tenaciously and who were responsible later in re-establishing the Hindu faith among the people of Kashmir, and low-caste tribes who followed the calling of scavengers, night-watchmen, and boatmen, caste system, as prevalent in other parts of India, was absent. We even find men and women of the low-caste Dombas occupying positions of responsibility. Under Cakravarman the Dombas practically held all important posts in the court and two Domba women became the king's favourite queens.

Brahmins were, however, the privileged and honoured caste and devoted mainly to the study of the scriptures and to the calling of priests and teachers. We also find Brahmins occupying high positions in the government of the country. Thus Mitrasarman was the chief minister of Lalitaditya and Devasarman of his grandson, Jayapida. Queen Didda's chief minister for a long time was Bhatta Phalgun. We also find the Brahmins in the army. Bujanga, the son of a Brahmin *Samanta* was employed by Samgramaraja in a responsible post in his

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikhi-i-Rashidi*, p. 430.



army. Kalhana's father, Campaka, held for a long time the post of the commander of forts under king Harsa.<sup>1</sup> Ajjaka, a Brahman minister of Salhana, died in the battlefield while fighting against Sussala.<sup>2</sup> Lavaraja and Yasoraja, two Brahmans skilled in military exercises, were killed while fighting the assassins of Sussala.<sup>3</sup> Brahmans frequently took to arms during the unsettled times through which Kashmir passed often. A characteristic verse in the *Rajatarangini* mentions that in the peaceful times of Yasaskara, the Brahman priests of temples sheathed their swords and again took to their peaceful avocations.

Besides the sacrificial fees, the main source of their income was the revenue from land-grants or *agraharas*, donated by kings, nobles and pious traders and landlords. It, therefore, follows that the Brahmans in Kashmir were mainly dependent on land and formed a class of small landlords. They also enjoyed the revenue of the villages endowed to temples. Sometimes they sold flowers, incense, and other requirements of worship to people visiting the temples or shrines.<sup>4</sup>

Politically the Brahmans were a power to reckon with. Through the Purohita corporations who resorted to hunger strikes (*prayopavesana*) whenever any action taken by the king or his ministers went against their own interest or against those of the country, the Brahman class acted as an effective check on the power of the king. Often the Brahman assemblies were called upon to choose a suitable person for the throne when there was an interregnum. It was such an assembly of Brahmans who selected Yasaskara as the king of Kashmir. During the reign of queen Didda we find the Brahmans holding a fast for removing Tunga from the office of chief ministership. Later in the reign of Didda's successor, Samgramaraja, they again resorted to a fast for the removal of Tunga from his high office. King Harsa had to exempt the Brahmans from forced labour as they undertook a fast. Sussala was once brought to his senses by a similar fast when, neglecting his kingly duties, the Damaras got an opportunity to oppress the people. Even as late as 1172 A.D. the Brahmans and other leading citizens chose a king when the throne fell vacant for want of a successor to king Vantideva.

#### MILITARY CASTES

The fighting castes of old Kashmir are represented by the Tantrins, Ekangas and Lavanyas. The Tantrins appear to have formed

1 *Raj.*, vii—1177.

2 *Ibid.*, viii—472.

3 *Ibid.*, viii—1345.

4 *Ibid.*, v—168.

in Hindu times a military caste of strong organisation. They came into prominence during the early years of the tenth century A.D. when during the period of internal troubles between the succession of Partha and the defeat of Samkaravarman (936—36 A.D.) they organised themselves into a powerful condottiere and were at the height of their power. They acted as true Praetorians and king-makers. They raised different claimants to the throne of Kashmir one after the other, demanding larger and larger bribes from each puppet king and oppressed the land by their heavy exactions.

Subsequently they formed an important and often troublesome element in the army, in which they seem to have served as foot soldiers. They are in several references in the *Rajatarangini* clearly distinguished from the mounted forces and figure as royal guards.

The name Tantrin survives in the tribal name of Tantri which is borne by a considerable section of the Muhammadan agriculturist population of Kashmir. Families claiming the Tantri *Kram* or surname may be found in most of the towns and villages throughout the Valley.<sup>1</sup>

The exact meaning of the term Ekangas cannot be established with certainty. It is frequently used in Books Five to Seven of the *Rajatarangini* for the designation of an armed force. Troyer assumed them to have been royal bodyguards and various references in the Chronicle show that he is not wrong. They are mentioned along with Samantas (feudal lords), ministers, Tantrins and Kayasthas (officials) as influencing the affairs of the court and State.<sup>2</sup> They fought with the Tantrins, who supported another claimant to the crown,<sup>3</sup> and saved queen Didda from a rebel force, whose onslaught they opposed in orderly array at the palace gate.<sup>4</sup> They protected king Ananta with equal devotion against a pretender and were freed in return by the grateful prince from the harassing service at the *Aksapatala*.<sup>5</sup> It is in the vicinity of the *Aksapatala* that Harsa endeavoured to collect a force of Ekangas for a final struggle.<sup>6</sup>

The later references show that Ekangas were a force organised in a military fashion but employed chiefly for police duties. Their modern counterpart would be customs and forest guards, and other revenue collecting agents. Till the beginning of the present century

1 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, p. 219.

2 *Raj.*, v—342, 446 ; vi—91, 132 ; vii—135.

3 *Ibid.*, v—289.

4 *Ibid.*, vi—244.

5 *Ibid.*, vii—155-62.

6 *Ibid.*, vii—1604.

the 'Paltan Nizamat' was a regiment specially maintained in Kashmir for the support of the civil authorities, the collection of revenue, etc.

The Lavanyas who play a great part in the internal troubles which occurred in Kashmir during the closing years of the eleventh and the beginning of twelfth centuries, seem to have formed an important tribal section of the rural population who took to arms. Their name too survives in the modern *Kram* of Lon.<sup>1</sup> The numerous passages in which the Lavanyas as a body of individuals are referred to, tell us nothing about their origin, but show that many of them must have held a position of influence as land-owners or tribal headmen. Upto Jonaraja's time the Lavanyas seem to have retained a certain importance as their name is of frequent occurrence in his Chronicle, but by Srivara, the later historian, they are mentioned only once.

Among the other castes, the Nisadas were perhaps the original inhabitants of the Valley and were relegated to menial work by the Aryan settlers. We find a mention of the Nisadas in the *Rajatarangini* where they are designated as boatmen.<sup>2</sup> Similarly the low-caste Kiratas are mentioned as huntsmen who lived in forests and destroyed wild animals by raising fires or by laying traps. During recent excavations at Burzahom, a settlement of pit-dwellers was unearthed along with hunting equipment like stone daggers, etc. These definitely belonged to a hunting class and Kiratas were perhaps their descendants. Though racially the Kiratas in the rest of India belonged to the Tibeto-Burman group, there is no such indication of their origin in Kashmir.

The Dombas have been frequently mentioned by Kalhana as a caste of menials. Sometimes they are associated with Candalas.<sup>3</sup> Their exact occupation is not precisely indicated; they performed the duties of scavengers, night-watchmen, messengers, and singers and dancers. Dombas are mentioned as entertaining people with their music and dancing—they perhaps supplied the demand from common people for the much needed entertainment and relaxation.

The Candalas seem to have been employed as night-watchmen and the king's bodyguard.<sup>4</sup> They were proficient in the use of the slings and were fierce and cruel fighters. We find Candalas being

1 The designation Lon as other *Krams* in Kashmir is nowadays a mere name, there being nothing to distinguish those who bear it from other agriculturists in regard to customs, occupation, etc.

2 *Raj.*, v—101.

3 *Ibid.*, vi—192,

4 *Ibid.*, iv—516, vii—309.



several times employed by different groups to assassinate their rivals. They were also executioners and were no doubt universally hated.

The economic structure of ancient Kashmir as in the rest of India was mainly based on the conception of private property and ownership of wealth. This implied that apart from agriculture which was the main source of production, people took to trade, industry and other professions. Owing to the geographical insulation of the Valley, and its limited natural resources, trade and commerce occupied a secondary position to agriculture. During the rule of the Kushans and later of the Karkotas, Kashmir came into direct contact with the commercial centres in India and Central Asia, which must have naturally given rise to a boom in trade and commerce. And hence we find a rich class of traders growing up. The large hoards of Kashmir coins of the Karkotas found recently in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar indicate a flourishing trade between Kashmir and the rest of India.

#### THE DAMARAS

But this was only for a brief period. After the decline of the Karkota empire, Kashmir reverted to its traditional insulation and with the growth of population there was a pressure on land which favoured the growth of powerful feudal landlords—the Damaras.

The origin of the name Damara is shrouded in mystery. The important role that this landholder class played in the later history of the Hindu period, clearly indicates its power and influence in the Valley. That the Damaras derived this power from large holdings of land is apparent from the mention of their seats in highly productive parts of the Valley and of their boorish manners which show them 'more like cultivators though they carry arms'.

Kalhana's first reference to the Damaras occurs in the Fourth Book of the *Rajatarangini* where among the maxims set forth by Lalitaditya is one directing the ruler to prevent hoarding of wealth by landlords as otherwise they would become powerful and rich Damaras and defy the orders of the king.<sup>1</sup> These maxims seem to have been put in the mouth of Lalitaditya by later historians, and indicate the rapid growth of the Damaras after his death. It was no doubt facilitated by the weak and instable reigns of later Karkota kings and the internecine warfare among the various pretenders. The rich landlords who employed a host of paid soldiers took the sides of these pretenders alternately and virtually became king-makers.

<sup>1</sup> *Raj* ; iv—348.

Though in the latter part of the Fifth Book the mention of the Damaras is comparatively less, we find that Didda and other rulers had to take recourse to strong measures to curb their power. After Didda's death, however, when again internecine conflicts took the Valley under their grip, the Damaras were virtually the rulers. In the struggles for the throne between Ananta and his son Kalasa, and between Utkarsa and Harsa, the Damaras took the side of one or the other and the final issue of the conflict depended mostly on their support. By the twelfth century A. D. the Damaras had become very powerful. Sussala and Jayasimha spent the major part of their reigns in fighting them, but did not succeed in completely breaking their power. They had enormous wealth, a large army and strongholds in many important places in the Valley. Gargacandra, one of the Damaras, was so powerful that without his support no king could conveniently occupy the throne. 'The fortified residences of the Damaras frequently mentioned by the term *upavesana* were, like the castles of medieval feudal lords, centres of territorial divisions or Parganas (ancient Visayas) in which though they may have often comprised not more than a couple of villages, the king's authority could assert itself only by armed force at times of unrest. This condition of things continued for centuries after Kalhana's time, far into the Muhammadan period, and its recollection still lingers in the tradition of the agricultural population of Kashmir.'

With the acquisition of wealth and power, the social status of the Damaras also rose and we find them entering into matrimonial relation with the traditional ruling class and even the royal families. In Kshemendra's *Samayamatrika*, a Damara named Samarasimha appears as a wealthy, respectable and cultured citizen.<sup>1</sup>

A Damara's estate ordinarily passed to his descendants on his death, but it was not by inheritance alone that a man could enter this privileged class. The *Rajatarangini* mentions the case of a merchant who amassed sufficient riches to purchase a vast estate and gradually raised himself to the position of a Damara. Similarly the income of a Damara did not depend entirely on the revenue of his agricultural estate. He could engage himself in trade and commerce as well.

This shows that the Damaras did not belong to any particular tribe or caste. Some have for instance been called Lavanya Damaras, or Damaras who originally belonged to the Lavanya tribe.

But though Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* supplies us with enough material to trace the rising power of the Damaras, it leaves us in the

1 *Samayamatrika*, II, 214-15.

dark about the conditions under which their landed property, the basis of their power and influence, was acquired and held. "If we compare the conditions prevailing in other parts of India, where a similar class of landed aristocracy is still extant, the view suggests itself that a kind of service-tenure, the grant of land in return for military or other services, may have been the original foundation of the system. Yet even as regards this point the absence of an exact data prevents us from going beyond mere conjecture. Still less can we hope to ascertain the exact relations in which the Damaras may have stood towards their sovereign and towards the cultivators in matters of revenue, administration, etc. It is well known how multifarious and complicated the conditions regulating feudal tenure usually are even within a single Indian province or Native State."<sup>1</sup>

#### RELIGION

The earliest inhabitants of Kashmir had probably cherished some aboriginal beliefs, but so far no traces of their form of worship, etc. have been found. We have, however, in the *Nilamatpurana* and the Buddhist legends some indications of the cult of later settlements in the Valley. From these sources we find that before the Indo-Aryan immigration, the predominant cult was Naga or snake worship which has not ceased even till now and which manifests in the respect and sanctity that is attached to Nagas or springs in the Valley. Nagas or tutelary deities are supposed to reside in the springs and lakes and from early times considerable importance has been attached to their worship. The long account of Nagas given in the *Nilamatpurana*, the numerous temples built near the more famous springs, and the popularity and undoubtedly ancient origin of the pilgrimages directed to the latter, show the deep-seated belief in Naga worship among the people of the Valley.

#### NAGA WORSHIP

There are reasons to believe that in the fourth and third centuries B.C. Naga worship may have been the principal religion in Kashmir. The Buddhist text *Mahavamsa* mentions that when Ashoka's adviser Moggaliputta Tissa sent his missionary Majjhantika to preach Buddhism in Kashmir and Gandhara, he found it under the rule of Naga king Aravala who could destroy the corn and other harvests by hail-storms. Majjhantika was met with hail and rain on his approach to Kashmir, but being unaffected by this, the Naga king realised his spiritual powers and together with his followers accepted Buddhism. A similar legend is related by Heun Tsiang. These are, however, the Buddhist versions of the

<sup>1</sup> Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 307.



*Nilamatpurana* legend already mentioned in an earlier chapter. They seem to corroborate the belief that the Naga or snake worship was the religion of the original inhabitants of the Valley.

The *Nilamatpurana* relates in its initial chapter the origin of the presence of the numerous Nagas in Kashmir. The Naga children of Kadru, a wife of Kasyapa, being persecuted by Garuda, son of Vinata his another wife, fled to Satisaras (lake occupying the present Valley), where Vishnu granted them asylum.

Most of the rites prescribed in the *Nilamatpurana* are concerned with the nature of worship of popular deities. But there are some festivals which are particularly connected with the worship of Nagas. Thus Nila, the lord of the Nagas, was worshipped on the festival of the first fall of snow. He and other Nagas were also propitiated on Iramanjaripuja which took place in the month of Caitra (April). Another ceremony called Varunapancami was held on the fifth day of Bhadra (July-August) and was connected with the worship of Nagas. The *Nilamatpurana* also records the names of the principal Nagas worshipped in Kashmir, the total number being 527. The four *dikpalas* or tutelary deities guarding the cardinals were four Nagas—Bindusara in the east, Srimadaka in the south, Elapatra in the west and Uttarmansa in the north.

That the Nagas were popular deities in Kashmir is testified to by Kalhana. According to him, Kashmir was a land protected by Nila, Sankha and Padma. When Buddhism was the predominant faith, one of the early kings, Gonanda III, is said to have revived the ancient form of Naga worship as prescribed by *Nilamatpurana*. We have also the legend of Susravasa Naga and the mention of Padma Naga the tutelary deity of the Wular lake. Kalhana mentions the annual festival of Taksaka Naga at the village of Zewan which was "frequented by dancers and strolling players and thronged by crowds of spectators." Kshemendra also refers to a Taksakayatra festival in *Samyamatrika* (ii, 88). That Naga cult prevailed in the Valley long after the Hindu rule is testified to by Abul Fazal who says that there were 700 places of worship where there were carved images of snakes.

#### BUDDHISM

We have already traced the rise of Buddhism in Kashmir. Originally introduced by Ashoka, it attained its zenith during the reign of Kanishka and other Kushan kings. It was the centre of Buddhist learning and several Buddhist scholars lived and studied here. Not only the Kushans but several local rulers of Kashmir patronized Buddhism. Meghavahana prohibited the slaughter of animals and his wife, Amritaprabha, erected a *vihara* for Buddhist pilgrims from

foreign lands. During the reign of Pravarasena, his uncle Jayendra built the famous Jayendravihara and under Yudhisthira II, Pravara-sena's son, several *viharas* and *caityas* were erected by the king and his courtiers.

We have a fairly reliable account of the condition of Buddhism in Kashmir from the seventh century onwards. The Chinese travellers Heun Tsiang and Ou-kong, the Chronicle of Kalhana and the archaeological discoveries prove that Buddhism flourished under the Karkotas and their successors. Whereas Heun Tsiang mentions 100 monasteries in Kashmir in 631 A.D., his countryman Ou-kong who came a century later found 300 monasteries, which clearly shows that Buddhism was still in ascendancy in the Valley.

Though Buddhism seems to have been overshadowed by the growing Saiva and Vaishnava faith which became predominant in the Valley after the end of Karkota rule, it still enjoyed patronage of the kings and nobility and seems to have been the faith of a large section of the people. Avantivarman and his successors, though followers of Saiva and Vaishnava faith, donated land to *viharas* and also built new ones. Harsa no doubt was responsible for the destruction of several Buddhist shrines, but he was no protector of Hindu temples too. He destroyed these as ruthlessly as the Buddhist *viharas*. We, however, find that even in the twelfth century, Buddhism received patronage from Jayasimha. He built many Buddhist *viharas* and repaired several. His queens and courtiers are also recorded to have built *viharas* and *caityas*.

By the end of the thirteenth century, Buddhism disappeared from the Valley ; some of the followers perhaps adopted Islam and the rest found a welcome home in Ladakh, where it is still the predominant faith.

#### SAIVISM

If the religious beliefs of the kings and royal families be regarded as a fair index of the popularity of a religious cult, Saivism must have been the predominant religion in Kashmir long before Buddhism was introduced there. Even during the period of Buddhist ascendancy Saivism received royal patronage. It was towards the beginning of the eighth century that Buddhism was overshadowed by Saivism not because of religious persecution, but because it had continued to remain the basic cult of the people all through the preceding centuries.

Kalhana mentions the existence of Siva shrines of Vijayesa and Bhutesa even in Pre-Ashokan days, and records the foundation of the

temples of Siva Ashokeswara by Ashoka himself when he visited the Valley. He is said to have been a worshipper of Siva at the sacred shrine of Bhutesa. Ashoka's son, Jalauka, was an ardent Saivist and made a vow that he would daily worship Siva at the two shrines of Vijayeswara and Jyesthesa which are separated by a distance of 30 miles. For this purpose he had arranged a relay of horses every few miles and used to ride from one shrine to another in a few hours. He also erected a shrine of Siva Jyestharudra at Srinagar and built a stone temple at Nandiksetra for Siva Bhutesa.

Another king, Damodara II, is said to have been a devotee of Siva. The Hun ruler Miharakula who usurped the throne of Kashmir some time in the sixth century A.D., was a patron of Brahmans and upheld Siva worship. Later king Gokarna and his son and successor, Narendraditya Khinkhila, also built Siva temples.

Belief in attaining spiritual merit by the consecration of a large number of Siva *lingas* seems to have been common during the early period of Kashmir history. Tunjina I and his ministers constructed several shrines dedicated to the worship of Siva and placed therein a number of Siva *lingas*. Similarly king Sresthasena *alias* Pravarasena I constructed the first Pravareswara temple and Pravarasena II, who was an ardent worshipper of Siva consecrated the *linga* of Pravareswara. Another king Ranaditya is said to have erected temples and shrines in honour of Siva.

During the time of the Karkota rule, several important and beautiful temples seem to have been built for Siva worship. Narendraprabha, mother of Lalitaditya built a Siva shrine called Narendreswara. Lalitaditya himself is credited to have been an ardent believer in Saivism and erected the temple of Jyestharudra, making a grant of the revenue of several villages for its maintenance. He also made a grant to the shrine of Siva Bhutesa. His minister, Mitrasarman, his *guru*, Acarya Bhappata, and a host of courtiers built shrines and temples dedicated to Siva. His grandson, Jayapida, is also believed to have been a Saivite. His chamberlain, Aca, built the shrine of Aceswara.

The kings of the Utpala dynasty were also patrons of Saivism. Avantivarman founded at Avantipura the temple of Avanteswara and also fitted pedestals with silver conduits at the Siva shrine of Tripureswara, Bhutesa and Vijayesa. He regularly went to worship at the shrines of Bhutesa and other places. His minister Sura built a temple for Siva and Parvati at the sacred site of Sureswariksetra and another at Bhutesa.

Avantivarman's son and successor, Samkaravarman, was also a



devotee of Siva and built in his new city of Samkarapura, two temples dedicating them to the worship of Siva. Ruins of these temples are still found at Pattan, seventeen miles below Srinagar on the Baramula road.

Several kings who followed the Utpala rulers, were ardent devotees of Siva. For instance, Parvagupta who was on the throne of Kashmir in about the middle of the tenth century founded a temple called Parvagupteswara and his successor Kshemagupta erected the temple of Kshemagupteswara in honour of Siva. Similarly several kings of the first Lohara dynasty were Siva worshippers. Samgramaraja is said to have obtained religious merit by restoring the famous shrine of Rameswara. Queen Suryamati founded the temple of Gaureswara and also consecrated another temple of Sadasiva near the palace. Her devotion to Siva is apparent by her consecration of *trisulas*, *Banalingas* and other sacred emblems. Her husband, king Ananta, is also recorded to have been a devotee of Siva. His son, king Kalasa, who also held the same belief restored the famous stone temple of Vijayeswara which had been damaged by fire. He also built the Siva temples of Tripureswara and Kaleswara, adorned with golden parasols, cups and other paraphernalia of worship.

Under the second Lohara dynasty, Saivism continued to flourish. Jayasimha is said to have built new and restored several old temples and shrines dedicated to Siva. His minister Rilhana also built a Siva temple. Similarly his ministers, queens and other courtiers built shrines and temples in honour of Siva. The virtuous king Simhadeva "bowed to Samkara, the lord of Gauri, and caused Vijayeswara to be bathed in milk."

Several of the temples and shrines enumerated above have been identified with the large number of ruins dotting the Valley. The popularity of Saivism among the mass of common people during this period is shown by the images of Siva in different forms and the innumerable *lingas* found intact or scattered in pieces and fragments all over the Valley.

"The form of Saivism in Kashmir during the early period was of the Pasupata sect. According to a tradition recorded in the *Mahabharata*, the doctrine of Pasupata was first preached by Siva Srikantha. It is interesting to note that Siva Srikantha was also regarded in the Valley as the promulgator of Sivagama or Agamanta Saivism which included the system of Pasupata."<sup>1</sup> A number of *Tantras* on which the early Kashmir Saivism was based seem to have preached

1 Sunil Chandra Roy; *Early History and Culture of Kashmir*, p. 152.

a dualistic doctrine. The *Advaita* Saivism founded and developed from the middle of the eighth century A.D. is perhaps the most solid contribution of Kashmir to Indian philosophy and culture and will be treated in detail in a later chapter.

#### VAISHNAVISM

Side by side with Buddhism and Saivism, the cult of Vaishnavism also flourished in Kashmir during the Hindu period. Pravarasena II, the founder of present Srinagar, is recorded to have consecrated the image of Vishnu Jayaswamin. King Ranaditya is also said to have founded the shrine of Ranaswamin. Though perhaps a legendary figure, Ranaditya's temples seem to have been real foundations as we find a mention of Ranaswamin temple in Jayanta Bhatt's *Agamadambara* and also Kalhana's reference to it in the Fifth Book where he speaks of a visit paid to Ranaswamin by Cakravarman's queen. Similarly Mankha (12th century A.D.) in his *Srikanthacarita* refers to his father worshipping at this shrine. Jonaraja also makes a reference to it in his commentary.

Under the rule of the Karkota dynasty, Vaishnavism not only received royal patronage but seems to have been popular among the people. Durlabhavardhana and his minister built temples dedicated to Vishnu. His grandson Candrapida who lived in the eighth century A.D. consecrated the shrine of Vishnu Tribhuvanaswamin. His preceptor who seems to have been a Vaishnava also built the temple of Gambiraswamin. Lalitaditya built several temples in honour of Vishnu. Resolved upon the conquest of the world, he built a shrine of Kesva Vishnu in the early part of his reign. He built Vishnu temples at Huskapura and Lokapunya. In the former he installed a gold statue of Vishnu. In his new city of Parihasapura he built a splendid temple of Parihasakesva with a silver statue of Lord Vishnu. Another splendid temple with the image of the boar incarnation of Vishnu was erected in the same city. He also consecrated two images of Vishnu, one under the title of Govardhanadhara and the other of Ramasvamin, the latter near the temple of Parihasakesva.

Lalitaditya's zeal for foundations of Vishnu temples, shrines and statues, was perhaps responsible for similar pious works of his queens, ministers and courtiers. Some of the later Karkota kings also patronized Vaishnavism. Jayapida, for instance, built a few shrines in his city of Jayapura and his mother Amritaprabha built a temple Amritakesva in memory of her dead son. Many more Vaishnava foundations were made during the reign of Ajitapida. Under the Utpalas, Vaishnavism seems to have had its heyday. Avantivarman, who though professing Saivism in public, was at heart a Vaishnava, which fact he confessed at the time

of his death. He built the shrine of Avantiswamin and his minister that of Suravarmanswamin. His engineer, the illustrious Suyya, also seems to have been an ardent Vaishnava. Not only did he build the temple of Hrisikesa Yogaswamin at the confluence of the Vitasta and Sindhu, but he also prohibited fishing and hunting in the Wular lake.

The popularity of Vaishnavism in the eighth century is further attested by the discovery of several images of Vishnu in His different Avataras throughout the length and breadth of the Valley, particularly at Verinag, Martand, Avantipura, Baramula and Andarkot.

From the tenth century A.D. to the end of the Hindu rule in the fourteenth, we find several kings and queens founding temples and shrines. Though the kingdom was reduced to its lowest depth of misery due to unstable rule and constant civil war, we still learn of the building of Vaishnava temples by queen Sugandha, king Partha, Yasaskara, Kshemagupta and queen Didda. The iconoclast Harsa destroyed a large number of temples of all sects and melted the copper, brass, silver and gold images therein to replenish his empty treasury, but after his death we find that Uccala, his successor, made some amends by restoration of old and building of new Vaishnava temples. Even after his death Vaishnavism seems to have been popular as we learn of the building of Gokulas by Ratnavali the queen of Jayasimha and also by several of his courtiers.

"In the Vaishnavism of Kashmir, we find a synthesis of the different Vaishnava cults which were current in ancient India. In it seems to have mingled the faith of the Vedic Vishnu, the system of Pancaratra school, the religion of the Satavata and the faith of the cowherd god Gopala Krishna. Rama was worshipped as an incarnation of Vishnu, but there is no definite evidence of Rama-cult in early Kashmir."<sup>1</sup>

#### MINOR GODS AND GODDESSES

Besides Siva and Vishnu, there seems to have been a universal faith in the usual Hindu gods particularly Ganesa, Skanda and Surya. According to Kalhana an image of Vinayaka Bhimaswamin existed in Kashmir as early as the days of Pravarasena II. The shrine has been identified with the temple of the *svayambu* (self-made) image of Ganesa at the south-east spur of Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar. Stone images of Ganesa have been found in almost all the old temple ruins in the Valley. That Avantipura was a centre of Ganesa worship is testified to by Kshemendra who says that bowls of sweets offered to Lord Ganesa were resold by the Brahman priests in the town. According to *Nilamat-*

1 Sunil Chandra Roy, *Ibid.*, p. 157.



*purana*, the eighth of the dark fortnight of Asada (June) was dedicated to the worship of Ganesa and went by the name of Vinayaka-astami.

Skanda or Kumara worship in early Kashmir is borne out by the discovery of the stone images and sculptures in old temple ruins. The *Nilamatpurana* also refers to the worship of Kumara on the sixth of lunar Caitra (March) every year to ensure the welfare of children. The worship of the Sun seems to have been brought into Kashmir by the Kushans, probably from Iran, as we have the evidence of its early introduction from the *Rajatarangini* which mentions the building of a temple to the Sun-god by king Ranaditya. In the eighth century A.D. king Lalitaditya built his famous temple of Martand near the shrine and sacred spring of Bavan. Most Sun temples in India and most of the images of Surya go back to the period of the Gurjara-Pratihara empire (circa A. D. 800—1000), though only four of these temples have become famous as to continue as prominent centres of pilgrimage—Multan, Modhera, Konarak and Martand. Sun worship continued to be in vogue in Kashmir long after Lalitaditya. We are told that king Suravarman II (A. D. 939) paid homage to the temple of Sun-god Jayaswamin. The most celebrated shrine of Sun worship in the Valley in the eleventh century A.D. was Tamraswamin, the image of which was melted by king Kalasa for coinage. His illness which followed was attributed to this sacrilegious deed and in order to atone for it he went to die at the feet of the image of Surya in the Martand temple. Kalasa's son, Harsa, who destroyed temples and divine images all over the Valley desisted from touching the image or temple of Martand, out of respect or probably out of fear for the Sun-god.

But the most popular and universally respected shrines were those of Goddess Durga in her various forms of Sharika, Raginia, Sarada, Jwala, Kali and Varahi. In the numerous springs, temples, hills and rocks, still respected and worshipped in the Valley, we find the memory of their popularity in ancient Kashmir. The *Rajatarangini* is full of references to 'Matricakras' or the mystic symbols of the various goddesses. Hundreds of images of Sakti in her various forms have been found in old temple ruins in the Valley. We also find images of the goddess Lakshmi and of Saraswati and along with the worship of Vishnu, these also found a prominent place among the goddesses worshipped by the people of ancient Kashmir.

### POSITION OF WOMEN

A striking feature of the political history of Kashmir during the Hindu period is the important and sometimes decisive role played by women in the affairs of the State. Be it as queens or as ordinary

inmates of the harem or as courtesans, women come frequently into the picture.

This position of importance implies that women of at least the upper classes received education of not only a general nature but in diplomacy and statecraft too. Bilhana, the poet laureate at the court of the Calukya king Parmadi (11th century A.D.), says in the last canto of his "Life of Vikramankadeva", while describing his homeland, that the women of Kashmir spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit fluently.<sup>1</sup> There is, however, reason to believe that women of lower castes did not have this distinction and they had to be content with their vernacular speech.<sup>2</sup> A closer study of Damodargupta's *Kuttanimata Kavya* shows that women of higher castes and affluent classes received education which included the sexual sciences of Vatsyayana, Dattaka, Vitaputra and Rajaputra, the art of dancing as propounded by Bharata, art as in the treatise of Visakhila, music as for instance in the works of Dantila. They had moreover to learn botany, painting, needlework, woodwork, clay-modelling, cookery and receive practical training in instrumental music, singing and dancing.<sup>3</sup> No wonder we find the women of Kashmir as active as men in the discharge of public duties. There is no indication of women being in seclusion or relegated to the background. The use of the veil was non-existent. We find for instance women seated along with other officials and ministers in the court of Harsa.<sup>4</sup> We find them fighting alongside men on foot and on horseback. Vijayamalla while retreating after the unsuccessful coup against his brother, king Harsa, was ably assisted by his brave wife who clinging to him on his horse kept the pursuers at bay. Both of them and their horse swam across the flooded Vitasta near Shadipur, and thus escaped to the country of the Dards.<sup>5</sup> We have examples of heroism displayed by queen Didda and later by Kota Rani.

That women enjoyed equal rights with men is amply proved by the annointment of queens along with their husbands at the time of coronation. When, for instance, Harsa soon after his release from captivity was about to ascend the throne, "there came before him Sugala, hiding by boldness her great offence, to claim her position as the chief queen."<sup>6</sup> We find several queens making their husbands' rule a success by their wise handling of the administration and the royal

1 *Vikramankadevacarita*, xviii-6.

2 *Raj.*, v-206.

3 *Kuttanimata Kavya*, 122, 123, 124.

4 *Raj.*, vii-945.

5 *Raj.*, vii-901-11.

6 *Raj.*, vii-830.

treasury. A notable example is of queen Suryamati, wife of king Ananta who, finding the king weak and about to be deposed by the rebellious Damaras, stepped in upon the scene and by her wise and judicious selection of ministers and officials restored the confidence of the people in the king's administration. Later she even forced the king to abdicate in favour of his son Kalasa who, she hoped, would prove a more capable ruler.<sup>1</sup> Similarly queen Didda dominated her weak husband Kshemagupta and virtually ruled in his name. Later as regent and queen she controlled the destinies of the kingdom for half a century. That the queens of Kashmir were considered to be politically as important and powerful as the kings is illustrated by a passage in the *Rajatarangini* where a forgotten Rani named Sarada, "an insignificant person who lived in Lohara", was made use of for the purpose of giving her sanction to legalise the rebel action of Lothana, a pretender to the throne of Jayasimha. The rebels had "first conspired with the wife of the king-designate", which also shows the active participation of the ladies of the ruling class in political work.<sup>2</sup>

That women owned private property is illustrated by another illuminating reference by Kalhana. While enumerating the chief Damara lords who remained neutral in the rebellion raised by Bhoja, another pretender to Jayasimha's throne, he mentions a Damara lady also who held the fief in her own right.<sup>3</sup>

Women had thus "emerged from the domestic into the political stage, were free, owned immovable property, managed their own estates and even fought at the head of their troops."

Regarding the proper age of marriage there is no evidence forthcoming from the *Rajatarangini*. But it seems that pre-puberty marriages were not in vogue.<sup>4</sup> We learn, for instance, from a passage describing Sussala's fight for the throne that the wife of his ally the powerful Damara lord, Gargacandra, brought her two youthful daughters one of whom was married to Sussala and another to his son Jayasimha.<sup>5</sup> It brings another significant practice into view—that of inter-caste marriages. Damara Kosthaka was married to a Rajput lady. We have the example of Cakravarman marrying *Domba* girls and elevating them to the position of chief queens.

The family life of the king and the nobility was polygamous. The seraglios of the kings were full of queens, concubines from all castes

1 *Raj.*, vii-233

2 *Raj.*, viii-1823. See also vii-535, viii-1968, 3070-73 3096-3109.

3 *Raj.*, viii-3115.

4 *Desopadesa*, vii.

5 *Raj.*, viii-459-60.



and their example was followed by the courtiers and aristocrats. Polyandry does not, however, seem to have been in vogue, though in certain hill states bordering on Kashmir and among some aboriginal tribes it might have been practised. Since the Hindu system of joint-family was universal, we find the daughter-in-law under the constant supervision and control of her mother-in-law. Queen Suryamati, for example, treated the wives of her son, Kalasa, harshly and required them to clean the palace with their own hands.<sup>1</sup> Widows were expected to live a pure life, devoid of all luxury. The ornaments or gorgeous dress were forbidden to them.<sup>2</sup> But the remarriage of widows and of other women does not seem to have been absolutely forbidden. We have the example of king Pratapaditya II marrying the wife of a rich merchant Nona. Kota Rani's remarriage with Udyanadeva after the death of her husband Rinchin, shows that widow marriage was permitted.

This brings us to the custom of *Sati*, the burning of a widow on the funeral pyre of her husband. The custom seems to have been widespread among at least the ruling classes. The Damara widows, for instance, did not follow their husbands to the pyre. In a passage where he praises the wife of the Damara Kothaka who became a *Sati* when her husband was mortally wounded, Kalhana does not omit to contrast this conduct with that of the ordinary Damara women who did not show much regard for their character as widows. Kalhana plainly attributes the exceptional conduct of Kothaka's wife to her noble descent from a family of Rajputs.<sup>3</sup> In Somadeva's stories of *Kathasaritasagara* we find several instances of this custom. The *Rajatarangini* gives a number of historical cases of widows burning themselves at the death of their husbands. Surendravati and two other queens of Samkaravarman were cremated with his body.<sup>4</sup> At the death of Yasaskara, his wife Trailokyadevi followed him on to the funeral pyre.<sup>5</sup> Queen Suryamati burned herself along with the dead body of her husband, king Ananta. Mammanika and six other queens accompanied king Kalasa to death, and so did Kumudalekha to her husband, Malla.

Not only was the widow expected to become *Sati* along with the dead body of her husband, she burned herself even separately after some days of his death as did, for instance, Jayamati, the queen of Uccala. Nor was the custom of *Sati* confined to the royal family

1 *Ibid.*, vii-250.

2 *Ibid.*, viii-1969.

3 *Raj.*, viii-2337.

4 *Raj.*, v-226.

5 *Ibid.*, vi-107.

alone. Malla, the wife of Bhogasena, the chief justice of Uccala, followed her husband to death. Sometimes courtesans accompanied their masters into fire. Jayamati a harlot of king Kalasa and Sahaja a concubine of king Utkarsa, entered the pyre of their dead masters. The custom of *Sati* was so deep-rooted that even mothers, sisters and other relatives burned themselves at the death of their beloved deceased. Gajja cremated herself with her son Ananda, Vallabha with her brother-in-law Malla and the sister of Dilhabhattaraka with her brother. The custom seems to have been in general vogue long after the end of Hindu rule, when Sultan Sikandar considering it contrary to the law of Islam, stopped it forthwith.<sup>1</sup>

From a perusal of Kshemendra's and Damodargupta's works, it appears that prostitution was popular in society during the Hindu period. Because of their graces of form and manners and accomplishments, the courtesans enjoyed high social esteem. We learn also from contemporary literature that they were renowned for their beauty, wit and other accomplishments, as well as their wealth and luxury.<sup>2</sup> They often adorned the king's inner apartments and were usually the power behind the throne. But the immoral atmosphere among certain classes gave rise to, and fostered the growth of, certain evil practices in the society, one of which was the institution of *devadasi* or dedication of girls to the temple deities.

The custom seems to have been in practice all over India from early times. Kalhana mentions that king Jalauka<sup>3</sup> gave hundred ladies of his seraglio who were well versed in dancing and singing to serve in the temple of Jyestharudra. It seems that the custom continued during the Karkota rule as well. Lalitaditya, in the course of a hunting expedition, came across two dancing girls dedicated to a temple: Kalasa married a dancing girl, Kayya, who was dedicated to a temple. Utkarsa, his son, "had seen Sahaja, who had been a dancing girl attached to a temple, on the dancing-stage, and had taken her as a concubine into the royal seraglio."<sup>4</sup> When she had been a courtesan, she had been favoured also by Harsa, who implored her not to become a *Sati* after Utkarsa's suicide. Kalhana himself was an eye-witness of superannuated dancing women in the temples of the Valley.<sup>5</sup>

This practice of *devadasi* seems to have received opposition from the honest and pure-minded section of the people. Alberuni refers to

1 Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol. I, p. 146.

2 *The Classical Age*, p. 568.

3 *Raj.*, i-151.

4 *Raj.*, vii-858.

5 *Ibid.*, viii-707.

such opposition in the north-west India of his time, but laments that this opposition was of no avail since the kings and nobles supported the custom.

### ADMINISTRATION

According to Kalhana the sovereignty of the State lies in the king, who is of divine origin and has absolute power. In the opening chapter of his work we find an allusion to the divine origin of the king when on Lord Krishna's advice queen Yasovati was made the regent of her infant son on the death of king Damodara. The nobles and ministers grumbled at a woman being crowned queen, but Lord Krishna appeased them by reciting the following verse from the *Nilamatpurana* :

“Kashmir is Parvati ; know that its king is a portion of Siva. Though he be wicked, a wise man who desires his own prosperity will not despise him.”<sup>1</sup>

The Buddhist conception of monarchy also conformed to this theory, though in a different way. The king is called Sarva Mahasakya and we find an echo of it in the *Rajatarangini* in connection with the story of an attempted assassination of king Jalauka, Ashoka's son, by a witch. Having failed to achieve her black objective, the witch addresses the king in the following words :

“The excited Buddhas sent me forth to kill you. But then the Bodhisatvas called me and gave me the following directions : ‘That king is a great *Sakya* (Mahasakya). You cannot hurt him ; but in his presence, O good one, you will obtain liberation from darkness (sin)’.”<sup>2</sup>

The king on his part had to be humble and modest, versed in sacred and secular lore. He received his training for the high office from his childhood and particularly when he occupied the position of Yuvaraj. We have an idea of the strenuous training that a Yuvaraj received from an autobiographical recollection of Samkaravarman.<sup>1</sup> In reply to his son's remonstrances not to burden the poor subjects with heavy exactions, Samkaravarman disdainfully says :

“When I was a boy I also had, like you, great affection for the people. My father (Avantivarman) was making me run along his horses barefooted and with heavy armour when hot, and in thin clothing when cold, to make me feel the hardships the common people endure, so that when I ascended the throne, I would not

1 *Ibid.*, i-72.

2 *Raj.*, i-140-44.



be too hard upon my subjects. But in spite of these practical lessons, I have become hard-hearted—the concomitance of authority and despotism—and I would entreat you not to behave in a harder manner than myself when you attain royal dignity.”<sup>1</sup>

Though the office of kingship was hereditary, we have several instances of kings being placed on the throne of Kashmir either by the council of ministers or by a committee of nobles and Brahmins. Meghavahana and Matrigupta were chosen by the ministers<sup>2</sup> and when queen Sugandha (A.D. 904-6) wanted to nominate a fit successor to the throne she had to seek the advice and permission of the ministers.<sup>3</sup> Similarly king Yasaskara (A.D. 939-48) had also to secure the approval of the ministers to the consecration, before his death, of Varnata as king.

#### COUNCIL OF MINISTERS

In order to carry on successfully the heavy work of administration, the king depended on the assistance of his ministers. In the pre-Ashokan period, the government of Kashmir was of the same pattern as in other States of India, with seven officials or ministers—the Judge, the Revenue Superintendent, the Treasurer, the Commander of the Army, the Envoy, the Purohita and the Astrologer. With the extension of Ashoka's empire to Kashmir, it seems the system of Mauryan administration was introduced. Jalauka increased the number of offices to eighteen and by this act, according to Kalhana, inaugurated the constitutional system of Yudhisthira,<sup>4</sup> meaning thereby the eighteen Departments of State mentioned in the *Mahabharata* (II 5-38) and *Ramayana* (II 100-36). These were the Councillor, the Purohita, Heir Apparent, Generalissimo, Chamberlain, Steward of the Royal Household, Superintendent of Prisons, Treasurer, Auditor of the Treasury, Officer with Judicial Functions, Prefect of the City, Engineer of Works, Lord Chief Justice, President of the Assembly, Warden of Criminal Jurisdiction, Warden of Fortifications, Warden of Marches, and Conservator of Forests.

The system continued till the time of Lalitaditya who created five new functionaries of high status (*Pancamahasabda*) which were scarcely more than mere court titles.<sup>5</sup> We find the title of *Pancamahasabda* bestowed upon his chief minister, Mitrasarman. Another minister to

1 *Raj.*, v-195-203.

2 *Ibid.*, iii-2, 233-40.

3 *Ibid.*, v-250.

4 *Raj.*, i-118-20.

5 *Ibid.*, iv-141.

have borne it was Jayadatta in Jayapida's reign. Utpala, the maternal uncle of Cippatajayapida, who usurped all royal power also held this title.

Of all the ministers the *Sarvadhikara* or chief minister was the most important and powerful. His position was 'above anybody' and he was directly chosen by the ruler. Judging from the comparatively rare mention of the post in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini*, it may be concluded that it did not figure regularly as the highest step in the official hierarchy, but was bestowed only on dignatories of exceptional influence and power.<sup>1</sup> This is indicated by the fact that Tunga,<sup>2</sup> queen Didda's all-powerful minister bore this title and also by the administrative measures recorded of *Sarvadhikarin* Gauraka.<sup>3</sup> It seems that generally the powers attached to this post were divided among several ministers.<sup>4</sup>

From Kalhana's account it appears that the prime minister dictated the policy of the State and if the king was weak or ineffective, it was he who exercised the supreme power of the Government.

The next in rank and importance was the minister in charge of revenue administration, known as *Graha-kṛtyadhikarin*. He also received his appointment direct from the king. It appears from Kshemendra that this post, which was originally created by Samkaravarman, was one of the most important offices and it was the highest ambition of every revenue officer to occupy this position.<sup>5</sup> He had under him the official treasurer (*ganjavara*) and five secretaries (*divira*). All domestic expenses, such as grants to temples, Brahmans, the poor and the strangers, grants for the fodder of domestic animals and salaries of royal servants could be incurred only with his consent. Seven officers whom he could appoint worked under him.

Another important minister was the one in charge of foreign affairs (*Samdhivigraha*) and of peace and war, and relations with other kingdoms. He drafted and signed treaties on behalf of the king. We have an important reference to his powers in a verse in the *Rajatarangini* where Lalitaditya's minister of foreign affairs, Mitrasarman, objects to the draft of the treaty with Yasovarman of Kanauj, on the point of a diplomatic usage.<sup>6</sup>

1 *Raj.*, vii-364,568 ; viii-862, 1850,

2 *Raj.*, vi-333.

3 *Ibid.*, viii-560.

4 *Ibid.*, viii-2471.

5 *Narmamala.*, I-32, 50.

6 *Raj.*, iv-137-38.

The office of the minister-in-waiting (*Padagra*) combined the duties of revenue collection and finance administration. It is probable that the superintendent of *Aksapatala* or the department of accountant-general and the *Pattopadhyaya*, the recorder of official documents, functioned under him.<sup>1</sup> It is evident from several passages in the Chronicle that the superintendent of the *Aksapatala* held an important post having under his command a contingent of Ekangas or military police. "It is curious to note", says Stein, "that the modern *Daftar-i-Nizamat* which until the recent administrative changes represented in Kashmir the Accountant-General's office, had actually under its control the force called 'Paltan Nizamat' to which that of Ekangas closely corresponds."<sup>2</sup>

#### JUDICIAL ADMINISTRATION

All Hindu theory lays the greatest stress on the administration of justice as an essential part of the protection to which the people are entitled from the government.<sup>3</sup> According to Manu, the king should normally preside over the law-courts and be assisted by Brahmans and experienced councillors. The king is to hold court in a sparate building in his own palace. The delegation of this regal duty to a chief justice is equally well known to Indian tradition. This delegate, who in the Dharma texts figures under many different names may well have taken his title of *Rajasthanadhikara* or simply *Rajasthana* from the royal palace in which his court was held.<sup>4</sup>

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* we find that the functions of *Rajasthanadhikara* were connected with the administration of justice. It was evidently a high post, judging from its mention along with the commander-in-chief and the Lord of Marches. The list of great officers given at the commencement of the Fourth Book of *Lokaprakasa* describes him as looking after the protection of the subjects.

Below the chief-justice there were other subordinate judges who were designated as *Tantrapati* and *Rajasthanamantrinah*. Judicial powers seem to have been exercised by other civil officers too : for instance the accounts-office called *Seda* is described as a *Rajasthana* in

1 *Raj.*, v-398.

2 Trans. of *Rajatarangini*, vol. I, p. 224.

3 We have a typical instance of king Harsa in the beginning of his reign installing four bells at the palace gate "to inform him by their sound of those who came to make representation"—*Raj.*, vii-879.

4 *Raj.*, vii-601 viii-181, 1046, 1982, 2618.



one of the passages of the Chronicle.<sup>1</sup>

The chief of the police department was called *Dandanayaka* or *Dandadhikarin*.<sup>2</sup> He presided over an elaborate police force spread all over the kingdom. There was a regular system of espionage, the spies being known as *cakrika*, *pisuna* and *pumscalaka*.<sup>3</sup>

#### DISTRICT AND VILLAGE ADMINISTRATION

Below the Council of Ministers the most important office in the governmental machinery was that of the *Mandalesa* or governor. As already mentioned, the Valley was divided into two administrative divisions—Kamraz (*Kramarajya*) and Maraz (*Madavarajya*)—which were put under the charge of a *Mandalesa*.<sup>4</sup> A third division, that of Lohara, was added during the rule of the Lohara dynasty. The *Mandalesa* was the head of administration of the division. Both the divisions of Kamraz and Maraz were sub-divided into a number of *visayas*, corresponding to the modern Parganas. Each *visaya*, according to Kshemendra, was under an officer known as *Margapati*.<sup>5</sup> He supervised the collection of taxes, administration of justice and maintenance of law and order. He inspected roads and bridges and checked the accounts of village officials.

The administration had the village as the unit and the institution of village officials existed from ancient times.<sup>6</sup> The two important officials of village administration were the headman (*Skandaka*), the modern Muqadam or Lambardar, whose function, besides collecting the land revenue and other cesses, was to look after the welfare of the village and ensure a liaison between the villager and the government. He has since ancient days been an important factor in rural administration. His office was generally hereditary, but subject to change by the *Margapati*. A specified percentage of revenues collected by the *Skandaka* was retained by him as his emolument.

The other important village official was the village accountant (*Gramakayastha*) who kept the papers showing the area of the holdings of the villagers, with their revenue assessment, etc. He held his office at the will of the *Margapati* and as we learn from the *Rajatarangini* paid bribes to him for retention of his post.<sup>7</sup> Several kings (for example Samkaravarman) levied on the villages, in addition to regular assessment, contributions for the monthly pay of the *Skandaka* and *Gramakayastha*.

1 *Raj.*, vii-576.

2 *Raj.*, vii-591, vii-640.

3 *Narmamala*, p. 6.

4 *Raj.*, vii-1304.

5 *Narmamala*, I, 97, 127.

6 *Raj.*, v-175.

7 *Raj.*, v-265.

The major towns and cities were under the administrative charge of the *Nagaradhikrta*, also called *Nagaradhipa* (the City-Prefect). He was in charge of collecting house and scavenging tax, and other cesses. He inspected weights and measures of traders and checked abuses which caused disorder in commercial transactions. He levied fines on householders guilty of the immoral conduct of their women-folk and punished those who had carnal intercourse with dancing girls received in house-holds as wedded wives. He was evidently an inspector of morals.<sup>1</sup> The maintenance of law and order of the city was one of his duties and we find one of these officials, Vijayasimha, distinguishing himself by the suppression of all thieves.<sup>2</sup> The *Nagaradhipa* was also expected to organise the defence of the city in times of emergency. The city-prefet, Naga, was in charge of a large force and was entrusted with the defence of the city when Sussala and Uccala attacked king Harsa.<sup>3</sup> Another city-prefet, Janaka, was called by Sussala to suppress a revolt of his troops which broke out in the city.<sup>4</sup>

Yasaskara appointed four prefects in order to increase his revenue by the contributions they had to offer in competition. The officials had of course to recoup themselves by increased taxation from the citizens.<sup>5</sup> Bhuyya, a contemporary city-prefet of queen Didda, is said to have encouraged her in her religious edification.<sup>6</sup>

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini*, it appears that Kashmir had developed a well-organised and efficient system of executive, revenue and judicial administration, which explains the continuity and maintenance of a smooth government even in times when there was a rapid change of rulers. With slight modifications effected now and then to suit the fiscal policy of various kings, the administrative machinery mainly followed a uniform pattern throughout the Hindu period.

#### KAYASTHAS—THE CIVIL SERVANTS

To man this efficient but complicated machinery, there was evolved a highly trained class of civil servants known as Kayasthas. The term Kayastha did not denote any particular caste, but applied to all the members of bureaucracy—from the lowest clerk to the highest official. The career of a Kayastha was open to all castes and classes of population. Kalhana specifically mentions one instance of a low class *aramika* (vegetable gardener) entering into the ranks of bureaucracy as a Kayastha. But it seems that the great mass of them was undoubtedly

1 *Raj.*, viii-3336-38.

2 *Ibid.*, vii-580.

3 *Ibid.*, vii-1542.

4 *Raj.*, viii-814.

5 *Raj.*, vi-70.

6 *Ibid.*, vii-296.

Brahman by caste, corresponding to the *Karkun* section of Kashmiri Pandits of modern times. A Kayastha drew his salary from the royal treasury probably on the monthly basis, but besides this he often usurped part of the taxes he collected, and also realised unjust and often vexatious bribes and other perquisites from the people who came under his charge. While describing the condition of the Valley under Jayapida's reign, Kalhana says that Kayasthas carried off most of the taxes realised from the people, depositing only a small fraction in the king's treasury. Both Kshemendra and Kalhana make many a hard hit at the vices of the Kayasthas—their greed for money, dishonest dealings, low moral character and pride.

But due to their efficiency in conducting the day-to-day administration, the Kayasthas, particularly during the later centuries of Hindu rule, acquired enormous power. It was for their capacity to raise new taxes that "the kings of Kashmir became habituated to looking at the faces of the Kayasthas for guidance, and to following the direction of their servants."<sup>1</sup>

The *Narmamala* of Kshemendra written during the reign of king Ananta, contains a detailed account of the Kayasthas and mentions a large number of posts held by them. The increase in the number of official posts denotes a greater interference with the private life of individuals and the close inspection of their doings. Particular attention was paid to the realisation of revenue from landholdings. This is explained by the increasing pressure on land, which followed the policy adopted by later Hindu rulers of a strict isolation of the Valley, resulting in restricted trade and commerce. Naturally the land had not only to support the swelling population but also to fill the king's treasury; hence the increase in the number of officers for supervision of landed estates and for collection of taxes therefrom.

This naturally made the Kayasthas unpopular with the masses, and to win the support of the latter, some of the kings like Uccala, for instance, adopted severe measures to curb the power of the Kayasthas.<sup>2</sup> But they soon regained ascendancy under the rule of his successors and when a century later king Jagadeva tried to imitate Uccala in his policy towards the Kayasthas, he had to suffer defeat at their hands and was forced to abdicate and leave the Valley.<sup>3</sup> The Kayasthas became indispensable and gained in power and prestige. We find them occupying a strong position in the political set-up of Kashmir even long after the end of Hindu rule.

1 *Raj.*, iv-623.

2 *Raj.*, viii-85-114.

3 Dutt, *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 8.



## MILITARY ORGANISATION

The king's armed forces were under the charge of the *Kampanesa*, also called *Kampanadhipati*, *Kampanapati*, etc, the Commander-in-Chief.<sup>1</sup> He was one of the highest functionaries of the State, next only to the Yuvaraj or heir-apparent, and the prime minister. He organised the foreign expeditions and was the leader of the royal troops in fights, sieges, etc. Under him there were other army officers some of whom were designated as *Kampanodgrahaka*.

But the most important post in the military organisation of Kashmir was that of *Dvarapati*, also called *Dvaradhipa*, the commander of frontier passes. The kings of Kashmir from ancient times paid special attention to the defence of the passes leading into the Valley and established watch stations and forts (*dranga*) by which a careful guard was kept over the passes. Numerous passages in the Chronicles show that they served at the same time the purposes of defence, customs and police administration. They were garrisoned by troops under special commanders designated as *Drangesa* or *Drangadhipa*. The control over all these frontier stations and the command of the 'Marches' was vested in one high State officer, known by the title of *aDvrapati*.

The history of Kashmir shows that it was on the defence of these frontier passes that the safety of the Valley depended and hence it is understandable why the post of the *Dvaradhipa* wielded so much influence and power. We are told that the post required soldierly qualities and implied rough duties.<sup>2</sup> We generally find him engaged in fighting the troublesome tribes on the frontiers of the Valley and warding off the inroads of numerous pretenders to the throne of Kashmir, or preventing their escape by closing the routes leading out.<sup>3</sup> The *Dvaradhipa* also exercised judicial power over the commandants of the forts.<sup>4</sup> It is clear from Kalhana's expressions recording the frequent transfer of the *Dvar* office in the troubled times of the beginning of the twelfth century that the charge of the 'Gate' was never held by more than one person. It signifies a unity of command over all the passes.

Ancient Kashmir had long and brilliant military traditions. Being a small Valley, favoured by nature with a beautiful landscape

1 *Raj.*, vii-154, 267, 923, 1319, viii-177, 180, 860, 960, 1046, 1959, 2205, 3322.

2 *Raj.*, viii-422.

3 *Raj.*, vii-966, vii-912, 584.

4 *Ibid.*, vii-1172.

and rich and fertile soil, it was coveted by people from the inhospitable regions of Central Asia and Tibet. Naturally, Kashmir had to perfect its military organisation for self-defence. During the time of the Indo-Greek occupation as also when it was a part of the Kushan empire, Kashmiris received a thorough schooling in new methods of warfare. But basically these conformed to the traditional military organisation as prevalent in the rest of India. We thus learn of the preparations made by Embisaros (Abhisares), the astute king of Abhisaras (Poonch and Nowshera) to oppose, in alliance with Poros, the army of Alexander.<sup>1</sup>

With the extension of the Mauryan empire to Kashmir under Ashoka it was but natural that the military organisation as perfected by them should have been introduced there. Kalhana informs us that the army of Kashmir comprised the traditional four arms—the elephants, cavalry, infantry and letters (in place of the chariots in the plains), with their eighteen-fold divisions.<sup>2</sup> Each of these arms would naturally fall under the control of a distinct authority. There was, besides, the well-organised department of supplies and transport. Kashmir being an alpine country with difficult mountain paths, the use of wheeled carriages was not practicable. In their place there developed a system of *corvee* in the Valley. All able-bodied youth who did not otherwise join any combatant wing of the army, were liable to be called upon to carry rations, fodder for horses and elephants and other war supplies for the army on the march.<sup>3</sup> It seems that during the time of the Imperial Karkotas, services of these load carriers were paid for, as huge amounts of money collected during foreign campaigns in loot and tribute were available for this.<sup>4</sup> Samkaravarman, and later kings, whose expeditions did not meet with much success, had to take recourse to *Begar* or forced labour.

#### WAR ELEPHANTS

The elephant was used both for carriage, attack and defence.<sup>5</sup> Although not of much use in the hills, the elephant was a tower of strength in battles fought on the plains of India. Elephants seem to have been procured from the forests of Vindhyas, Assam and Kalinga.<sup>6</sup>

1 M'Crindle, *The Invasion of India by Alexander the Great*, p. 274.

2 *Raj.*, vii-1371 ; viii-1513. This refers to the conventional division of the army as indicated, e. g. in *Amarkosa*, ii-8, 79, 81.

3 Samkaravarman was certainly not the first to levy *Begar* for transport purposes, but he seems to have given to this *corvee* a systematic organisation and to have used it also for fiscal extortion. See Stein trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, p. 209.

4 *Raj.*, iv-176.

5 *Raj.*, iv-147 ; v-143-44 ; vii-1553-56 ; viii-9.

6 *Raj.*, iv 147.

They were protected with armour on the head, joints and other parts of their huge body. But often they were more a liability than an asset in a battle. King Harsa, for instance, who came out in person to fight the rebels in Srinagar had to suffer a terrible defeat when his fighting elephant, hit in joints by arrows from the rebel forces, "raised a trumpeting roar and turning back trampled down with his feet his own force. Attacked by the elephant which had turned hostile the foot and horse of the army were routed."<sup>1</sup>

#### THE CAVALRY

The main strength of the army, however, lay in its cavalry. Kashmir is fortunate in having a rich pasture land and mountain meadows which are admirably suited for horse-breeding.<sup>2</sup> Kalhana's references to swift and well-bred horses of king and their armies, shows the import into the Valley of the famous thoroughbreds of Central Asia and Afghanistan.<sup>3</sup> Horse was naturally the aeroplane of ancient warfare ; on its speed and mobility depended the fate of a battle. Both the rider and the mount were protected by armour. Judging from his numerous references to the horse, Kalhana, it seems, must himself have been a horseman. He tells us that his father Canpaka had a dispute over a mare with the crown prince Bhoja.<sup>4</sup> His account shows that the stability of the ruler of Kashmir depended upon the superiority of his cavalry and large treasures were expended in the purchase of thoroughbreds.<sup>5</sup>

The horseman carried two javelins and a buckler, a short sword, and wore chain-armour and helmet. It is interesting to find a reference in Kalhana to the leather cuirass<sup>6</sup> so popular with the Golden Horde of Chingez Khan which centuries later we find in the equipment of the officers of the famous Maratha cavalry. We have perhaps the best pen-picture of the arms and costume of a warrior of ancient Kashmir in the following description of Cakravarman's triumphant entry into Srinagar at the time of his restoration to the throne of Kashmir :

"With his noble charger proudly curvetting in the centre of the horse-guards ; raising the helmet when it slipped with the left hand which held the bridle, the ear-rings lit up by the glinting hilt which was held in the other hand moist with perspiration :

1 *Raj.*, vii-1552-56.

2 *Raj.*, viii-1577-78.

3 The horses of the Kambojas (Afghanistan) are referred to in *Raj.*, iv-165.

4 *Raj.*, vii-1592.

5 *Raj.*, iv-265, 415 ; v-143 44 ; vii-394, 403, 910, 1512-14 ; viii-9, 73, 199, 941.

6 *Raj.*, vi-248-49.



his face terrifying with the knitting of the eye-brows, being irritated by the pressure on the neck of his high and stiff armour ; threatening in bursts of anger the plunderers who had looted the shops and reassuring the affrighted citizens with signs of the head and the eye while the rattle of his kettle-drums, hindering the benedictory pronouncements of the citizens, rent the hearing—Cakravarman, resplendent in military triumph, made his entry into the city.”<sup>1</sup>

#### THE INFANTRY

The infantry were all armed with a broad and heavy double-edged sword, suspended from the left shoulder and a long buckler of undressed ox-hide. In addition to these arms, each man carried either a javelin or a bow or a mace. Besides, he had a double-edged long knife,<sup>2</sup> carried in a belt.

Kalhana gives at several places in his history description of chase, tourneys, duels and battles.<sup>3</sup> It appears that the infantry were highly trained in the art of shooting arrows and unerring darts.<sup>4</sup> He often refers to the “shower of arrows,”<sup>5</sup> which were at times treated with poison. While describing the heroic exploits of Kandarpa, the commander-in-chief of king Harsa, Kalhana records that he used burning arrows smeared over with vegetable oil, in the battle of Rajauri. Struck by these the enemy caught fire and fled in bewilderment, believing that he knew the use of the fire-weapon (*agnya-astra*).<sup>6</sup>

Another weapon in which Kashmiri soldiers specialised was the sling. With a round but sharp stone tied to its end, they flung the stone with unerring accuracy at the target. Kalhana mentions the use of the sling as early as the time of Jayapida. On his return from a conquering expedition in the south, he found the usurper Jajja on the throne of Kashmir. In the thick of the battle fought between the forces of Jayapida and Jajja, a Candala youth flung a stone with his sling at Jajja’s face which killed him outright.<sup>7</sup> The sling was the favourite weapon of Kashmiris till as late as the time of Gulab Singh who put a stop to the frequent mimic battles between youth of different wards of Srinagar who used to turn out with slings and stones and played a very serious and earnest game.<sup>8</sup>

1 *Raj.*, v-341-47.

2 *Raj.*, viii-29.

3 *Raj.*, viii-24, 28.

4 *Ibid.*, vii-156.

5 *Ibid.*, viii-25.

6 *Ibid.*, 984.

7 *Ibid.*, iv-475-79.

8 Lawrence *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 255.

## STRENGTH AND COMPOSITION OF THE ARMY

We have no reliable record of the strength of Kashmir army. It must have naturally varied from time to time. Kalhana, however, records that Jayapida's army including that of his feudatories comprised eighty-thousand litters (*kaniratha*), whereas that of Lalitaditya had over a lakh.<sup>1</sup> Samkaravarman's army, he says, consisted of nine lakhs of foot-soldiers, three hundred elephants and a lakh of horsemen.<sup>2</sup> Apparently, these are highly exaggerated figures. Vincent Smith writing about Chandragupta Maurya's army remarks that "incredible though they (the figures of its strength) may seem at first sight, they are justified by our knowledge of the unwieldy hosts used in war by Indian kings in later ages. For instance, Nunez, the Portuguese chronicler, who was contemporary with Krishna Deva, the Raja of Vijaynagar, in the sixteenth century (A.D. 1509-29), affirms that that prince led against Raichur an army consisting of 703,000 foot, 42,600 horse, and 551 elephants, besides camp followers."<sup>3</sup>

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* it appears that recruitment to various wings of the army was open to all castes and classes. We have already noticed that Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and agriculturists held responsible posts in the army and even the low caste Candalas and Dombas took to military service. Kashmir kings frequently recruited soldiers from the martial tribes of the Punjab and Frontier Provinces. Lalitaditya is said to have Turuska or Central Asian soldiers in his army. Harsa had several officers and troops from Muhammadanised Turks.

Weapons were manufactured in State factories, though the manufacture of ordinary arms by the people was not banned altogether. The State maintained armouries for the regular supply of arms to troops.<sup>4</sup> It appears that the army was in direct employ of the king and the soldiers and officers received their monthly salaries from the royal treasury. During a march outside their cantonment, the troops were entitled to an allowance.<sup>5</sup> Jayapida had to institute a mobile treasury and accounts office for the troops on the march (*calaganja*).<sup>6</sup> There was a special officer to procure and store fodder for the horses<sup>7</sup> and another to look after the uniform and equipment of the soldiers.<sup>8</sup> Like the soldiers of Napoleon, the ranks in the Kashmir army wore red trousers.<sup>9</sup>

1 *Raj.*, iv-407

2 *Ibid.*, v-143-44

3 *Early History of India*, p. 132

4 *Raj.*, viii-257

5 *Ibid.*, vii-1457

6 *Ibid.*, iv-589

7 *Ibid.*, iii-489

8 *Ibid.*, vii-365

9 *Ibid.*, viii-1883

## STRATEGY IN WARFARE

References to, and descriptions of, actual warfare are numerous in the *Rajatarangini*. Particularly interesting is the detailed account of Jayapida's capture in Nepal, his escape from close confinement and the subsequent assault of the Kashmir troops on the fort. We have also accounts of sieges laid to and defence of, impregnable forts of Lohara, Dugdhghata and Sirahsila in Kashmir. Interesting light is thrown on the strategy employed by various commanders in conducting their campaigns. For instance when Dhanya the commander of Jayasimha's forces laid siege to the fort of Sirahsila, the seat of a rebel Damara, he erected block-houses and also wooden sheds for his own troops under the protecting cover of arrows from a contingent posted on commanding positions on the hill. During night the besieging forces used so to light up the ground around the castle that "even an ant could not have moved out by the main road without being noticed." For its water-supply, the castle depended either on the rivulet to its east or on the river. From the former the besieged were at once cut off when Dhanya occupied the higher ridge to the south, and at the same time naturally also the eastern bank of the rivulet. The siege was so severe and effective that very soon the garrison had to surrender.<sup>1</sup>

The element of surprise was always resorted to by the military commanders. When, for instance, Tunga, the commander-in-chief of Didda's forces, was severely punished by the forces of the chief of Rajauri in a battle in a defile, he led a small force and "suddenly penetrated into Rajauri by another route and burnt it down entirely." This diversion not only gave him complete victory, but he was able to extricate his forces caught up in the defile.<sup>2</sup>

Similarly Sussala's Damara supporters who being themselves mostly on foot and afraid of facing the royal cavalry in the open plain, traversed a longer and difficult path skirting the mountains; and taking the king's forces by surprise captured the forts in the suburbs of Srinagar.<sup>3</sup>

The soldiers arraigned in the battlefield vied with one another in showing their willingness to fight. The impatient soldiers got, so to say, intoxicated by the noise of kettle-drums and the battle cries of their comrades. We have a vivid picture of a battle scene in the *Rajatarangini* of Srivara, of its 'mighty clash of arms providing the thunder of applause':

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1 *Raj*, viii-2580.

2 *Raj*, vi-348-53

3 *Raj*, vii-1374.



"The soldiers called out to one another saying 'come', 'stand here', 'where do you go', 'you are mine'. The setting sun behind the Kashmirians shone on the points of their swords, as if to assure them of victory. Eager for fame, the warriors moved in the field of battle, each trying to go first, even like bees in the garden, eager for flowers. Soldiers showed the movements of their bodies by their various postures, even as actors do in a dance on the stage. Arrows poured forth like rain from the cloud-like army whose arms flashed like lightning, and whose sound was like the sound of thunder."<sup>1</sup>

The soldiers had to live in encampments and their life was hard and rigorous. And yet they had ample opportunity for festivity and merry-making. Kalhana says that during the expedition of Lalitaditya the soldiers enjoyed the wine of palm trees after their victories in the South.<sup>2</sup> They also brought back riches when they returned to their homes. But it is not always that victorious Kashmir arms were carried to distant places. Often the Valley was attacked by hostile kings and chiefs from across the border, and the army was called upon to beat them back.

#### FORTIFICATIONS

This reminds us of the frontier and internal defences of Kashmir. As already mentioned the rulers of Kashmir took particular care to set up watch stations on the passes leading into Kashmir and built forts on commanding positions there. The art of fortification was highly developed.

The forts were so planned as to be able to stand a prolonged siege. Tanks were built for storing water and where this was not possible on account of hard rock and granite, arrangements were made to store snow in pits.<sup>3</sup> These forts were garrisoned by small detachments of trusted troops under the command of an officer called *Kotapadati*. They corresponded to the *Killadar* troops kept up in small detachments until a few years ago for the garrisoning of the numerous small forts in the hill-regions around Kashmir. These troops were permanently settled in particular forts, and generally held land in their neighbourhood.<sup>4</sup>

In the Valley proper there were forts of two types—land forts and water forts. The land forts were generally built on spurs of hills or on *Karewas*. As an instance of water fort we have the one built by Jayapida in his new town of Jayapura. Called *Abhyantara Kotta* (modern Andarkot) or the 'Inner Castle', it occupied a strong position

1 Dutt, *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 295

2 *Raj.*, iv-155

3 *Raj.*, vii-1172-75.

4 Drew, *Jummoo*, p. 95.

being situated on a plateau surrounded on all sides by water.<sup>1</sup> It was here that Kota Rani, the last Hindu ruler, was besieged by and surrendered to the forces of Shah Mir.

During the troubled days of the later Karkota kings and after, we find the Damara lords building their castles at their seats, and from there defying the writ of the king. These Damaras came to be designated as Kotta (Castle) Rajas and Kalhana and the later Chroniclers are full of descriptions, often humorous, of the way they vaunted authority in their fiefs.

Srinagar, the capital of Kashmir, has from ancient times been its political and cultural centre. Strangely enough, it has had no fortifications, except perhaps the fort on the Hari Parbat hill which was built as recently as the middle of the 18th century.

"We can," says Stein, "attribute this exceptional position of Srinagar to the great natural advantages of its site.....The frequent sieges which Srinagar underwent during the last reigns related by Kalhana, give us ample opportunity to appreciate the military advantages of the position of the city. With the exception of the comparatively narrow neck of high ground in the north, the city on the right river bank is guarded on all sides by water. On the south the river forms an impassable line of defence. The east is secured by the Dal Lake and the stream which flows from it. On the west there stretch the broad marshes of the Anchar Lake close to the bank of the Vitasta."<sup>2</sup>

## REVENUE AND EXPENDITURE

To meet the expenses of maintaining a large standing army, as well as of the civil services, the king resorted to taxation of various kinds. The sources of revenue tapped were many and varied. As the economy of Kashmir depended mainly on agriculture, the revenue derived from land was the major item of the income of the government. The *Rajatarangini* is silent on the rate of taxation, but it may be assumed that in normal times the proportion was one sixth of the produce as the share of the government. This increased to one half during the times of the later kings. In one instance we learn that the king took away even the cultivators' share of the produce for three consecutive years.<sup>3</sup> There is no indication of a proper settlement of land revenue, but the mention of the office of *Gramakayastha* or village

1 *Raj.*, iv-506-11.

2 *Trans. of Rajatarangini*, Vol. II. p. 445.

3 *Raj.*, iv-628.

accountant and of the *Skandaka* the modern Lambardar, indicates that there must have existed some sort of record showing what a man's holdings in land amounted to, and what his revenue liabilities were.

The land revenue seems to have been reckoned from early times in grain as is proved beyond all doubt by the detailed account of Abul Fazal, which shows that the revenue administration in Kashmir was similar in the Hindu times as well. In a territory isolated by great mountain barriers like Kashmir, such a system based on the staple produce of the country and the main foodstuff of its inhabitants, must have specially recommended itself by its stability.

Over and above the land revenue, the cultivators had to pay other taxes, both direct and indirect. In realising the land revenue in rice or other produce, it was easy for the king's officials to systematically defraud the cultivator by the use of wrong weights.<sup>1</sup> Samkaravarman levied contributions for the monthly pay of the *Skandaka* and the *Gramakayastha* from the villagers. This levy seems to have continued down to the beginning of the present century, as in the statement in Lawrence's *Valley of taxes* levied from a Kashmiri village, we find in addition to the regular assessment, a 'Patwari tax', a 'Kanungo tax' and a 'Tax on account of establishment.'

Samkaravarman instituted the system of levying *Begar* (forced labour) from the villagers, originally for transport purposes, and later for fiscal extortion. Villagers, it appears, who did not turn up to carry their allotted loads, were fined at enhanced rates, and the same fine was levied the following year a second time from the village as a whole. Kalhana mentions thirteen kinds of *Begar* which a villager could be called upon to render to the king. Though these are not specified, they possibly included, like the *Kar-i-Begar* of the last century, various requisitions for village produce free of payments, which could be made by officials.<sup>2</sup>

Besides the revenue from land, the kings levied direct taxes of all sorts from town and city dwellers, from artificers and market shops. Jayapida resorted to several exactions, but his officials "carried off all property of the subjects while delivering only the smallest fraction of what they realised."<sup>3</sup> During the reign of Ajitapida, his chief minister, Utpala, carried away the revenue realisations collected by three departments of revenue and created another for the maintenance of the king<sup>4</sup>. Samkaravarman established two new revenue offices called *Attapati-bhaga* and *Grahakritya* ('domestic affairs'). The collection of revenue

1 *Raj.*, v-171.

2 *Ibid.*, v-174

3 *Ibid.*, iv-629..

4 *Ibid.*, iv-691



from a variety of direct taxes was entrusted to the former and the latter was responsible for collection of revenue from 'deducting or adding to the due weights, from fines and similar imposts.'<sup>1</sup> They may also have possibly included fees at certain domestic events, such as marriages, *Yagnopavita*, etc.<sup>2</sup> To assist the officer in charge of *Grahakritya*, he appointed five secretaries (*divira*) as also a treasurer (*ganjavara*). Cakravarman who on his restoration to the throne in A.D. 935 had to pay heavy bribes to his supporters, the Tantrin foot soldiers, resorted to heavy taxation through the officials of *Aksapatala* and *Grahakritya*, but the people having been reduced to the lowest depths of poverty could not pay these additional levies.<sup>3</sup>

King Yasaskara appointed four city-prefects (*Nagaradhikara*) in order to increase his revenue by the contributions they had to offer by competition. The officials had, of course, to recoup themselves by increased exactions from the citizens.<sup>4</sup> The variety of taxes and fines that they used to collect can be estimated from the fact that they levied fines even "on householders in the case of immoral conduct on the part of a married woman and on persons alleged to have had carnal intercourse with dancing girls who had been received into households as wedded wives."<sup>5</sup>

With the increasing instability of administration during and after the tenth century A.D., and the consequent impoverishment of the people, the revenue receipts naturally dwindled, and we find the kings and their zealous ministers instituting new and more unjust methods of taxation. Under Abhimanyu (958-972 A.D.) when Didda was the regent, the officer-in-charge of the treasury named Sindhu, created new imposts and thus "became the founder of the revenue-office called after him *Sindhuganja*."<sup>6</sup>

The condition of the people was deplorable during the reign of Harsa. Given to extravagant expenditure on his court and personal enjoyment, and "upon various corps of his army", he stooped to all means of collecting funds to meet these expenses. "O shame !" writes Kalhana in indignation, "though he possessed his grandfather's and father's treasures and those which Utkarsa at the commencement of his reign had brought from Lohara, and though he had confiscated from the temples the riches bestowed by former kings, yet he endeavoured to secure more wealth by oppressing the householders." He levied new imposts through several 'prefects of property' (*nayaka*) who "seized

1 *Raj.*, v-176.

2 *Ibid.*, viii-1428.

3 *Ibid.*, v-302.

4 *Ibid.*, vi-70.

5 *Ibid.*, viii-3336.

6 *Ibid.*, vi-266.

property of all sorts". All imaginable classes of trade and manufacture were taxed, so much so that he "appointed also a 'prefect for night-soil' to raise revenue."<sup>1</sup> The people who evaded payment were tormented by his officials who inflicted heavy fines "as if a boulder were thrown on an old bullock which has become worn out by dragging the plough."<sup>2</sup>

It seems that during the comparatively peaceful reign of Jayasimha, some of these imposts were abolished, but not before an outburst of popular anger. The Brahmins of Avantipur held a solemn fast against the policy of the powerful minister Citaratha, who was increasing the imposts. But this made no impression on the obstinate minister. Finally, a Brahman youth named Vijayaraja, Kalhana's contemporary, taking recourse to terrorist methods, attacked Citaratha with a dagger and grievously injured him. "Vijayaraja disdained to flee although he could have done so, announced that he had stabbed the minister, and was killed bravely fighting against odds as an act of supreme sacrifice."<sup>3</sup>

There is no indication in the *Rajatarangini* of the amount of revenue collected by the kings of Kashmir from land and other sources. Considering the huge amounts spent by the kings and queens on dress and jewellery, and the magnificent temples and palaces erected by them, it seems to have been considerable. The army and the civil service were besides, a great drain on the revenues as also the several expeditions against neighbouring principalities. Often, the king of Kashmir had to pay subsidies to them.

We also learn from several passages in the Chronicles that some enlightened kings like Lalitaditya and Avantivarman undertook extensive irrigation projects. Suyya's expenditure on clearing the bed of the Jhelum at Baramula of rocks and silt, has already been indicated.<sup>4</sup> It seems that large amounts were also spent on the maintenance of roads and bridges.<sup>5</sup> Public bath-houses on the Jhelum in Srinagar were also built by the government.<sup>6</sup> There is mention at several places of schools and hospitals as well as of public rest houses set up by the kings.<sup>7</sup>

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1 *Raj.*, vii-1100-1107.

2 *Ibid.*, 1225-26.

3 Pandit, *The River of Kings*, p. 602.

4 *Raj.*, v-84-117.

5 *Ibid.*, iii-354 ; vii-909, 1539 ; vii-482.

6 *Ibid.*, viii-2423.

7 *Ibid.*, ii-58 ; iii-461, 480, Vol. II, p. 395.

Large stipends and scholarships were paid to outstanding poets and authors, as also to artists, musicians and dancers. Udbhatta, Jayapida's Chief Pandit, was paid a sum of 100,000 *dinaras* as his daily allowance.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, heavy subsidies like those paid to Sahi princes who lived at the court of king Ananta, constituted a serious drain on the royal treasury.<sup>2</sup>

### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

With its fertile soil and abundance of water supply, Kashmir has been from ancient times depending mainly on agriculture as the principal source of food and wealth. The Valley was dotted with numerous villages and, according to Kalhana, the villagers were wholly absorbed in agriculture.<sup>3</sup>

The chief crop to the cultivation of which the agriculturists devoted their labour and time was rice. Its character as the main cereal is sufficiently emphasised by the fact that Kalhana refers to it by the simple term of *dhanya*, 'grain'—a term by which paddy is known in Kashmir even at the present time. Cultivation of rice pre-supposes abundance of irrigational facilities which exist in the Valley. The novel and elaborate contrivances by which water taken from rivers and streams is distributed over the rice-fields seem to have existed in one form or the other from ancient times. That there are definite indications of an elaborate system of irrigation having been present proves further the antiquity of rice cultivation in the Valley. It appears that all available land on the hill sides, *karewas* and low lying tracts by the marshes, must have been under cultivation.

That there was a greater pressure on land in olden times due to the swelling population is attested to by "traces of old irrigation-cuts long ago abandoned which brought down the water of the melting snows from alpine plateaus high above the forest zone. Their distance from any lands capable of rice cultivation is so great, and the trouble of their construction must have been so considerable that only a far greater demand for irrigation than the present one can account for their existence."<sup>4</sup>

The fact that the destruction of rice crops always resulted in scarcity and famine shows that rice was the staple food of the people. According to Marco Polo (13th century A.D.), rice was the principal

1 *Raj.*, iv-495.

2 *Ibid.*, vii-144.

3 *Ibid.*, vi-9.

4 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, p. 427-28.



food of the people of Kashmir.<sup>1</sup> The seed was sown in the month of Caitra (March)<sup>2</sup> and by the month of Bhadra (September) the fields were covered with ripened paddy.<sup>3</sup> The fields had to be properly ploughed up before sowing of seeds and oxen were employed for tillage.<sup>4</sup> Harvesting was done in the month of Asvina (October) after which the ceremony of new crops (*navana*) was performed.<sup>5</sup> We have an interesting reference which closely resembles the modern practice among householders of drying their paddy in the sun before husking in the story of the Naga maiden who married a Brahman youth and who was watching her paddy spread on the ground to dry.<sup>6</sup>

Besides rice we have evidence of the cultivation of barley and pulses too. These crops, according to the *Nilamatpurana*, ripened in the month of Jyesta (June). The pulses consisted of several varieties such as gram (*cana*), lentil (*masura*) and blackgram (*muga*).

Fruit cultivation seems to have been practised in Kashmir from ancient times. We have mention of grapes and grape-gardens in the *Rajatarangini*. Grapes "which were scarce even in heaven were common in Kashmir." The town of Martanda, for instance, was "swelling with grapes" during Lalitaditya's time.<sup>7</sup> Bilhana when singing of the beauties of his homeland mentions grapes growing in abundance in the Valley.<sup>8</sup> Apple (*palevata*) was also cultivated.<sup>9</sup> Heun Tsiang who visited Kashmir in the seventh century A.D. remarks that the country 'was a good agricultural one and produced abundant fruits and flowers'. Among the fruits grown were the pear (*li*), the wild plum (*nai*), the peach (*t'au*), the apricot (*hang* or *mui*) and the grape (*po-tau*).<sup>10</sup>

The cultivation of saffron has been a monopoly of Kashmir from ancient times. Known also as Kashmiraja it was, according to Kalhana, one of the five things for which Kashmir was famous, and the privilege of royalty to use it as a scented salve or emollient. Saffron was also used as an ingredient in Greek medicine and cuisine and it continues to be so used in Kashmir. In the *Nilamatpurana*, we often find references to *kumkum* (saffron) and Bilhana testifies to its growth in the Valley.<sup>11</sup> The legend about its origin connects it with the plateau of Padmapura (Pampur) where the first bulb was planted by the famous physician, Wagbhata, who received it as a gift from Naga Takshaka on his being cured of an eye disease. The elaborate method of its

1 Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. I, p. 166.

2 *Nilamatpurana*, 529-41.

3 *Raj.*, ii-18, v-270, viii-770, 795.

4 *Ibid*, iv-347.

5 *Nilamatpurana*, 748-754.

6 *Raj.*, i-246.

7 *Ibid.*, iv-192.

8 *Vikram*, xviii, 72.

9 *Raj.*, vi-356.

10 Beal, *Si-yu-ki*, Vol. I, p. 88.

11 *Vikram*, xviii-72.

cultivation in well-prepared beds seems to have been followed from ancient times.

Kuth (*Saussurea Lappa*) which is an important forest product, though not cultivated as such, was also used in medicine and incense. So was *dhupa*, another forest by-product from which an incense was prepared for use in worship. Kalhana has several references to *dhupa*, which seems to have been an article of trade among the Brahman priests in the temples of Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

#### IRRIGATION

In the earliest traditions recorded by Kalhana, the construction of irrigation canals plays a significant role. The Suvarnmankulya (modern Sunmankul) which is ascribed to king Suvarna and which still brings water to a great part of the Advin Pargana is of great antiquity.<sup>2</sup> The reference to the aqueduct by which king Damodara is supposed to have attempted to bring water to the plateau named after him, though legendary in the main, is also characteristic.<sup>3</sup> Lalitaditya is credited with having supplied to villages near Cakradhara (modern Tsakadar) with irrigation facilities by the erection of water-wheels (*araghatta*) which lifted water from the Jhelum.<sup>4</sup>

We have already noticed the vast irrigation and flood protection works completed by Avantivarman's engineer-minister, Suyya (Chapter Five). He is said to have "embellished all regions with an abundance of irrigated fields which were distinguished for excellent produce." The increase in the produce of rice and other crops following these measures, and the reclamation of new land from river and marshes lowered the average price of rice from two hundred to thirty-six *dinaras* per *khari* (176 lbs).<sup>5</sup>

#### LAND TENURE

The immemorial tradition in Kashmir considered all land as the property of the ruler, and those who cultivated it as his tenants. This explains the innumerable grants of *agraharas* or *jagirs* to favourite officials and ministers by several kings and queens and the endowment of villages for the maintenance of temples and hospices.<sup>6</sup> This practice of granting *jagirs* is perhaps responsible for the growth of the Damara

1 *Raj.*, ii-122 ; viii-143.

2 *Ibid.*, i-97.

5 *Ibid.*, v-116.

6 *Ibid.*, i-87, 88, 90, 96, 98, 100, 175, 307, 311, 314, 343 ; ii-55 ; iii-376, 481 ; iv-9, 639 ; v-23, 24, 175, 397, 403, 442 ; vi-89, 336 ; vii-182, 184, 185, 608, 898, 899, 908 ; viii-2408, 2419, 2420, 3355.

3 *Ibid.*, i-156.

4 *Ibid.*, iv-191.

landlords who played an important role in the politics of Kashmir during the rule of the later Hindu kings. Land granted to these barons and also to temples was, it seems, tenanted by small cultivators who, after deducting the State's share of the produce had to surrender another share to the landlords or to the managers of religious endowments.

We can deduce this from a significant verse in the *Rajatarangini* where Kalhana mentions the resumption of the land grants to temples by Samkaravarman, on the understanding that a fixed amount should be returned in compensation from the revenue of these villages. The land of these villages was subsequently taken under direct fiscal arrangement, which made it easy to reduce the compensatory allotment. The practice of some tracts of land being directly farmed by the State continues till today.<sup>1</sup>

A Damara's relations between the king on the one hand and the tenant on the other, cannot be traced clearly from the Chronicles. Some of the Damaras are said to have obtained revenue from their land, apparently their tenants.<sup>2</sup> There is also no record of the conditions under which a tenant of the State held his land. It is doubtful that he ever owned land as such, but probably he could transfer his rights to another on payment of cash. In the cities, we have definite evidence to prove, property was owned by the citizens who could sell or purchase it. King Yasaskara while deciding the property case of a Brahman had to examine the sale-deed of a house wherein he discovered a fraudulent interpolation by the Registrar of real estate sale deeds.<sup>3</sup> The office of *Aksapatāla* comprised also the Record Office or archives where all documents pertaining to transfer of property were recorded by a special officer (*Pattopadhyaya*).<sup>4</sup>

### INDUSTRIES AND PROFESSIONS

Though agriculture formed the main occupation of the inhabitants of the Valley, it appears there were several industries which gave employment to a fair proportion of the population. The most notable of these were the manufacture of textiles, leather-goods, and jewellery. There were also sculptors, wood workers and potters.

Both woollen and cotton textiles were produced in ancient Kashmir. Apart from the depiction of finely-clad figures on the terra-

1 *Raj.*, v-170-71.

2 *Ibid.*, vii-495.

3 *Ibid.*, vi-30.

4 *Ibid.*, v-301, 397.



cotta tiles unearthed at Harwan, there is the direct evidence of Heun Tsiang who records that the people of Kashmir wore clothes of white linen. "Their garments are made of Kaiu-She-Ye (Kansheya) and of cotton. Kaiu-She-Ye is the product of the wild silk worm. They have garments also of Ts'o-mo (Kshaumo) which is a sort of hemp; garments also made of Kien-po-lo (Kambala) which is woven from fine goat hair; garments also made from Ho-la-li (Karala)—this stuff is made from the fine hair of wild animals; it is seldom this can be woven, and therefore the stuff is very valuable and it is regarded as fine clothing."<sup>1</sup>

Thus we find the existence of a kind of silk industry in Kashmir in ancient times. In the Sabha Parva of the Mahabharata mention is made of a "thread spun by worms" among the many presents offered to Yudhisthira by a feudatory prince from the north-western side of the Himalayas, presumably Kashmir. We find an echo of its antiquity in Mirza Haider Dughlat's *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* (1540 A.D.) wherein he records that "among the wonders of Kashmir are the number of mulberry trees cultivated for their leaves for the production of silk."

The Ho-la-li (Karala) of Heun Tsiang definitely refers to *pashmina* or cloth made out of fine wool (*pashm*) of the shawl goat. The history of this industry goes to remote antiquity. When the Kashmiris took to it is not known, but a mention of shawls is made in the Mahabharata. Besides shawls, several kinds of blankets were also manufactured. Kshemendra's *Narmamala* and *Samayamatrika* have several references to these blankets. The chief centre of woollen manufacture was Pattan which had also a market for the sale of sheep and cattle.<sup>2</sup>

Smithery, of course, exists in Kashmir from ancient times. With agriculture as the main occupation of the people and with a large standing army of the kings always eager to launch conquering expeditions out of the Valley, there must have been a roaring business for the blacksmith. Besides, cooking vessels and other utensils were made of brass and copper. Ancient images in brass and copper of gods and goddesses have been discovered during excavations and this also presupposes the existence of a highly advanced industry of casting and moulding metals.

Closely associated with the metal industry was that of pottery. Excavations carried out at Burzahom by De Terra and his party have revealed a large quantity of earthenware. While the lower culture yielded a type of highly polished blackware and potsherds with incised

1 Beal, Vol. I, pp. 75, 76. Karala is *pashmina*.

2 *Raj.*, v-162.

geometric designs assignable to a period ranging from 3000 to 1800 B.C., the upper culture layer was found to contain potsherds belonging to the same Buddhist period as Harwan, which represents the 4th century A.D. We have already referred to this in our chapter on the Prehistoric period. At Avantipura a large number of huge jars for storing grain and other vessels have been recovered. Similarly we have the fine specimens of Gandhara art in the terra-cotta heads discovered at Ushkur in the Valley and Akhnur in Jammu. We have mention by Kshemendra of earthen rings worn by women of Kashmir as also a reference by Kalhana to a potter-woman. This indicates the existence of a highly developed and flourishing industry.

It seems Kashmir was also fairly advanced in glass manufacture, particularly bangles. In the *Rajatarangini* it is stated that the merchant Padmaraja regularly despatched to king Bhoja of Malwa, the water of Papasudana *tirtha* filled in large glass jars. A quantity of ancient glass fragments was found strewn on the road leading to the spring of Papasudana from the village of Kother.

Goldsmiths must have of course flourished in ancient Kashmir. Considering the numerous references in the *Rajatarangini* to gold bangles, armlets, rings and other ornaments worn by kings, queens and nobles, the goldsmith must have always had a busy time, particularly when the fashions in these changed from time to time.

Similarly the presence of numerous ruins of old temples with exquisite sculpture, fluted columns and trefoil arches, leaves no doubt to the existence in ancient Kashmir of a large number of masons and sculptors. Most of the temple buildings were no doubt in stone, but the cities and towns were, as now, built in timber. The mention of several devastating fires which burnt Srinagar and other towns to ashes, clearly indicates the use of timber in buildings. Naturally the carpenter and wood worker had a flourishing trade. Building of boats, palanquins and manufacture of household furniture were also some of the items for which the services of a carpenter were in demand.

Besides the above there must have flourished other minor industries too. There are references to gardeners, fishermen, garland-makers, barbers, teachers, and *Vaidyas* or physicians. There were copper and iron mines which must have given employment to a good number of workers.<sup>1</sup>

### TRADE AND COMMERCE

Ancient Kashmir had, as we have already noted, far flung political

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1 *Raj.*, iv-616-17,

and cultural contacts with distant corners of India, with Central Asia and Tibet and with China. Under Ashoka and later Kanishka, Kashmir became part of vast empires and being geographically situated at a central and strategic position in Asia, it became the meeting place of caravans from the plains of India and from distant cities in Central Asia.

Besides this entrepot trade, Kashmir also exported its own products particularly woollen goods, saffron and Kuth (costus) and small quantities of silk. The demand for the Kashmirian saffron in Indian markets was very great in ancient times. In Harsa's *Ratnavali* we have a reference to saffron of Kashmir being preferred to the saffron grown in the country of the Parasikas and Bahlikas. Heun Tsiang noticed woollens being worn by the inhabitants of the northern regions of India. Kashmir being a centre of woollen manufacture must have had a brisk export trade in this commodity. As the wool for the manufacture of shawls comes from the highland of Tibet, the trade with that country has therefore an ancient origin. The shawl is made of very fine, soft, short, flossy underwool called *keli phumb* or wool of *kel* (shawl goat), a variety of caprahircus, inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. These regions, owing to their high altitude, are intensely cold and nature has clothed the goats with this warm wool. The higher the goats live, the finer and warmer is their wool. The finest wool comes from the markets of Turfan, the collection centre of wool from the goats of Tien Shen mountains. The wool traders exchanged their raw wool for manufactured shawl goods and sold them advantageously in various markets of Central Asia, wherefrom they were carried to famous cities of Asia and Europe.<sup>1</sup>

That wool was one of the essential commodities of trade in Kashmir is evident from a passage in the *Rajatarangini* where Kalhana quoting the high prices of goods during the famine under Harsa, mentions besides that of rice, the staple food of Kashmiris, the price of wool.<sup>2</sup> Thus whereas raw *pashm* or shawl wool formed an important item of import, the manufactured woollen goods were the principal articles of export.

On account of difficulty of transport, fruit do not seem to have been exported though we may assume grapes to have been sent out of the Valley to markets in northern India. We have an echo of this in the *Ain-i-Akbari* where Abul Fazal mentions that "Kashmirians bring grapes on their backs in long baskets."<sup>3</sup> Since Kashmir was famous for grapes in ancient times,<sup>4</sup> it is but natural that this fruit must have

1 Koul, *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 21

2 *Raj*, vii-1221.

3 *Ain-i-Akbari*, I-p. 65.

4 *Raj*, i-42.



been in great demand, either fresh or in dried form.

Among other articles of import were salt,<sup>1</sup> spicess<sup>2</sup> and cotton and silk piecegoods<sup>3</sup> from the rest of India. Besides, we can safely assume the import of precious metals and copper and brass for coinage, etc. Marco Polo mentions that coral which was carried from the western parts of the world, had a better sale in Kashmir.<sup>4</sup>

Internal trade in the Valley was confined to food-grains, cattle, agricultural implements, earthenware and metallic vessels, and minor agricultural and industrial products. That Kashmiris of ancient times had well developed commercial sense is amply proved by references in the *Rajatarangini* to markets (*hatta*) in different cities of Kashmir.<sup>5</sup> The principal centres of trade in the Valley were the cities of Puranadisthana, Huskapura, Pravarapura, Parihaspura, etc.

Most of the internal trade in the Valley was carried by the river Jhelum and its tributaries. That from ancient times the boats were the principal means of transport and travel is shown by the frequent references to river journeys, boats and boat bridges and *ghats* or landing places in the Chronicle of Kalhana.<sup>6</sup> A striking passage in the *Rajatarangini* brings it out clearly. When king Kalasa, who was staying at Vijayeswara wished to pass his last days at the temple of Martand he "was carried by the water-route in boats, along with his ministers and seraglio" from there to the nearest *ghat* or landing place of Martand, presumably modern Khanabal.<sup>7</sup>

The import and export trade of the Valley was carried by the various routes leading to the rest of India and Central Asia, Tibet and China. A detailed description of these routes has already been given in Chapter One. The frontier watch stations (*dranga*) on the mountain passes over which most of the trade routes passed, also served as customs posts (*Sulkasthana*) where officials known as *Saulkikas* realised duties on goods imported into or exported from the Valley. This is borne out by a dramatic passage in the *Rajatarangini*. Koshesvara, a Damara lord in order to realise the ransom promised by the Chief of Lohara for handing over his opponent, Lothana, took a drastic step. "Imprisoning the officials he collected the customs at the watch-station (*dranga*) and had his own name stamped in red-lead on the wares as if he were the king."<sup>8</sup>

1 Kshemendra, *Narmamala*, I-127

2 *Raj.*, viii-1221.

3 *Kuttanimala Kavya*, 343.

4 Yule, *Travels of Marco Polo*, Vol. I, p. 167.

5 *Raj.*, i-201-2 ; iv-208.

6 See *Raj.*, v-84 ; vii-347, 714, 1628.

7 *Ibid.*, vii-714.

8 *Ibid.*, viii-2010.

That trade with the rest of India was highly remunerative is proved by several references in the Chronicle to rich merchants come to Kashmir from India. During the reign of Pratapaditya II, for instance, "the land was full of merchants of different wares come from all regions."<sup>1</sup> Some of them had houses as rich in decoration and luxury as the palace of the king. During the reign of Ananta, a merchant from India was entrusted by king Bhoja of Malwa to build a wall round the spring at Kapateswara and also to send its holy water to him every day in glass jars. He also supplied betel leaves to king Ananta and by trading in different commodities became so rich that when Ananta was in financial trouble he "became the king's creditor and took from him a diadem which was adorned with five resplendent crescents and the throne, as a security for money which was due to him."<sup>2</sup> Similarly a clever merchant, Jayyaka by name, "by selling victuals as a trader to far off regions, accumulated wealth, and became in course of time a rival to the lord of wealth (Kubera)."<sup>3</sup>

But generally the merchant class, and more particularly those carrying on petty trade and banking, seem to have become unpopular through their fraudulent transactions. This is accountable only by the decline in foreign trade during the later period of Hindu rule, when the trading class had very limited field for its activity.

#### CURRENCY AND WEIGHTS

In the numerous passages of the *Rajatarangini*, the later Chronicles of Jonaraja and Srivara, and in the *Lokaprakasa* of Kshemendra, we find references to the term *dinara* while stating the prices of commodities, amounts of salaries and the like.<sup>4</sup> It no doubt denotes the currency of the kingdom from ancient times. This word is well known to Sanskrit lexicography as the designation of a gold-coin. But in ancient Kashmir *dinara* appears to have been a mere abstract unit of account.

A comparison of tables of prices given by Abul Fazal and of the tradition surviving till recent times in Kashmir, with the data of the *Rajatarangini* and the later texts, clearly shows that the currency of Kashmir, at least from the ninth century onwards, was based on a decimal system of values starting from a very small unit. The values

<sup>1</sup> *Raj.*, iv-11.

<sup>2</sup> *Raj.*, vii-195.

<sup>3</sup> *Raj.*, vii-495.

<sup>4</sup> For a detailed discussion on the monetary system of ancient Kashmir see Stein, 'Notes on the Monetary System of Ancient Kashmir,' *Numismatic Chronicle*, xix, p.p. 125-74 from which the present information has been culled.

which can be shown to have been actually used in reckoning, are given in the following table with their Sanskrit and modern designations :

12 <i>dinaras</i>	= 1 Dvadasa ("Twelver"), <i>Bahagni</i>
2 Dvadasa	= 25 <i>dinaras</i> or 1 Pancavimsatika, ("Twenty-fiver") <i>Puntsu</i> .
4 Pancavimsatika	= 100 <i>dinaras</i> or 1 Sata ("Hundreder"), <i>Hath</i> .
10 Satas	= 1,000 <i>dinaras</i> or 1 Sahasra ("Thousander"), <i>Sasnu</i> .
100 Sahasra	= 1,00,000 <i>dinaras</i> or 1 Laksa, <i>Lachh</i> .
100 Laksa	= 1,00,00,000 <i>dinaras</i> or 1 Koti, <i>Crore</i> . <sup>1</sup>

The table on page 232 shows the coins which can be assumed to have represented monetary values of the above description at successive periods together with their metal and weight. The equivalent values for Akbar's time, calculated on Abul Fazal's estimate, are shown in a separate column.

The table shows that the only denomination of coins which can be traced throughout, is the copper coin representing 25 *dinaras*. Taking into consideration also the vast preponderance of these coins in quantity, the old currency of Kashmir must be described as one in copper.

But if the *dinara* was more than a mere abstract unit of account it could not well have been represented by any other token than the cowree. For the weight of copper which would correspond to the twenty-fifth part of a Pancavimsatika viz,  $\frac{9\frac{1}{8}}{25}$  or 3.54 grs. is manifestly too small for a real coin. No copper pieces of this diminutive size have been ever found in Kashmir.

That the cowree was from early times used as a monetary token in Kashmir as elsewhere in India, is amply shown by Kalhana's work. He names in a characteristic fashion the lowest and highest monetary values when he speaks of kings Samgramadeva who, starting with a cowree (varataka) had amassed crores.<sup>2</sup> Similarly Kshemendra humorously describes the miserly trader, who in the evening after fleecing his customers, is with difficulty induced to give three cowrees to his household.<sup>3</sup>

What was the value of a cowree in terms of *dinara* currency in ancient times is difficult to find out from the scanty material we have at our disposal, but from the popular reckoning in Kashmir surviving till

1 The term *dinara* (modern *dyar*) as conveying a sense of "money" has been in general use in Kashmir from ancient times to the present day.

2 *Raj.*, vii-112.

3 *Kalavilasa*, ii-5, 7.



<i>Value in dinaras</i>	<i>Designation</i>	<i>Early Hindu coins (up to A.D. 855)</i>	<i>Later Hindu coins (from A.D. 855 onwards)</i>	<i>Muhamadan coins</i>	<i>Equivalent values on Abul Fazal's estimate</i>
12	Dvadasa ( <i>Bahagni</i> )	...	Æ 45 grs.	...	$\frac{1}{8}$ Dam or $\frac{1}{3\frac{1}{2}0}$ Rupee
25	Pancivimsatika ( <i>Puntsu</i> )	Æ 110 grs.	Æ 91 grs.	Æ 83 grs.	$\frac{1}{4}$ Dam or $\frac{1}{18\frac{1}{2}0}$ Rupee
100	Sata ( <i>Hath</i> )	...	...	...	1 Dam or $\frac{1}{4}0$ Rupee
500	...	...	AR 23.5 grs.	...	5 Dams or $\frac{1}{8}$ Rupee
1,000	Sahasra ( <i>sasun</i> )	...	...	...	10 Dams or $\frac{1}{4}$ Rupee
2,500	...	AR 120 grs.	...	...	25 Dams or $\frac{2\frac{5}{4}0}{4}0$ Rupee
12,500	...	...	AV 73 grs.	...	125 Dams or $3\frac{1}{8}$ Rupees
100,000	Laksa ( <i>Lachh</i> )	...	...	...	25 Rupees
10,000,000	Koti ( <i>Cröre</i> )	...	...	—	2,500 Rupees

the beginning of the present century, a *Bahagni* was equal to eight cowrees and the *Puntsu* to 16.

Besides the cowree and the copper coins of *Puntsu*, etc., we find in ancient Kashmir another medium of exchange, namely rice. Considering the paramount importance which this grain, the staple produce of the Valley, has at all times possessed for the material condition of its inhabitants, it is only natural that it should have played its part as a subsidiary currency in Kashmir. By far the greatest portion of the land revenue being assessed and collected in *kharis* (modern *kharwar*) of grain, it necessarily follows that government payments were made in grain, giving it the sanctity and stamp of regular currency.<sup>1</sup>

It should not, however, be presumed from the above that there was no metallic currency in circulation in ancient Kashmir. Many coins of the Indo-Greek and Scythian rulers have been recovered from Kashmir.<sup>2</sup> During the Kushan period we find a bi-metallic currency of gold and copper in use. As Kashmir came in contact with flourishing trade centres of India and Central Asia, there must have poured into the Valley enough gold to enable its rulers to strike gold coins in

<sup>1</sup> See Lawrence, *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 243.

<sup>2</sup> Cunningham, *Coins of Indo-Scythians*, p. 44.

abundance. This metal naturally facilitated trade with foreign countries, as gold has from time immemorial been the medium of international exchange. This bi-metallic currency continued to be minted during the reign of the Kidara Kushans, though it was inferior in metal and type. A ready explanation for this debased currency is the instability and tyranny of the Hun king Mihirakula and his successors, which cut off the trade routes in northern India, thus directly affecting the normal flow of trade.

No wonder that the later Hun rulers like Toramana issued a prolific coinage in copper instead of gold and this continued perhaps till the beginning of the Karkota rule. Even though Kashmir attained great prosperity under them, we find only an electrum coinage of mixed metal which contained gold, silver and copper in different proportions. A large number of these coins have been found at as distant places as Uttar Pradesh and Bihar, showing the brisk trade going on between Kashmir and the rest of India during this period.

There was again a debasement in currency during the reigns of later Karkota kings, no doubt due to the instable political conditions prevailing in the kingdom. But when under Avantivarman, Kashmir witnessed an era of consolidation and peace, we find again the mixed gold coins in circulation. Later, excepting under Harsa when in the beginning of his reign he struck gold coins, we find the Kashmir kings of the Lohara dynasty reverting to copper coinage. It appears from a critical study of *Rajatarangini* that the kings, the Damaras, rich merchants and nobility were engaged in amassing bullion in the form of ingots and heavy ornaments. King Yasaskara carried with him two and a half thousand gold pieces when he went to pass his last days in the temple of Vijyeswara. Kshemagupta, popularly known as Kankanavarsa (bestower of armlets), and other kings and queens had rich treasures of gold in ingot and ornaments. Sussala is recorded to have transmitted gold ingots to his treasury in the Lohara castle. The only popular form of investment was the acquisition of ornaments in gold or silver and the king had the royal privilege of "marking the gold according to colour (quality), price, etc. which served to bring to light the savings of the people."<sup>1</sup> But all through this period there is no evidence of gold coinage, copper coins alone being in circulation.

Apart from political instability, the main reason for withdrawal of gold from circulation was the complete breakdown of trade and commerce with the rest of India following the policy of isolation adopted by the kings of later Hindu period. Bullion ceased to enter the

1 *Raj*, vii-211-12.

Valley and since there was no need of the precious metals for settling transactions with outside traders the remaining few gold coins also seem to have gone out of circulation.

The measure of weight in Kashmir has been the *khari* from time immemorial. We have reference to it in several passages of the *Rajatarangini*, Kshemendra's *Lokaprakasa* and Abul Fazal's *Ain-i-Akbari*. This ancient measure is mentioned in a hymn of the Rigveda (iv-32, 17) and was known to Panini. It is called *khar* in Kashmiri and *kharwar* (for *khar-bar*, ass-load) in Persian.

The division and weight of the *khari* does not appear to have changed from ancient times. According to Abul Fazl and Moorcraft (*Travels*, ii p. 135) a *khari* is equal to 1960 *Palas*. Taking the latter measure as equivalent to  $3\frac{5}{8}$  tolas, the *khari* corresponds to  $177\frac{1}{4}\frac{2}{5}$  lbs. The following table gives the equivalent weights of the *khari* and its subdivisions :

$3\frac{3}{4}$ tolas	= 1 Pala		
30 Palas	= 108 tolas	= 1 <i>Manut</i>	= $2\frac{1}{4}\frac{3}{5}$ lbs.
2 <i>Manut</i>	= 60 Palas	= 1 <i>Panzu</i>	
2 <i>Panzu</i>	= 120 „	= 1 <i>Trak</i>	
16 <i>Trak</i>	= 1920 „	= 1 <i>khari</i>	= $177\frac{1}{4}\frac{2}{5}$ lbs.

Land measures were calculated not by length and breadth, but by the amount of seed required by certain areas for rice cultivation. A *khari* of land—that is the rice area which is supposed to require a *khari's* weight of rice-seed—exactly corresponds to four British acres.

#### FLOODS AND FAMINES

It has already been mentioned (Chapter One) that the configuration of the Valley makes it liable to floods and naturally we find accounts of several devastating floods having caused immense damage to the crops in ancient Kashmir.

Kalhana mentions the drainage operations undertaken by Lalitaditya which reclaimed large tracts of swampy land and made them fit for cultivation. We have references to flood protection measures in the building of stone dykes and embankments.<sup>1</sup>

A detailed and authentic account of famines caused by floods is given by Kalhana while describing the elaborate flood protection measures undertaken by king Avantivarman under the direction of his engineer-minister, Suyya. It is mentioned that a *khari* of rice of which

1 See *Raj.*, i-159 ; iii-483 ; v-91, 103, 120 ; viii-2380 ; Jonaraja, 404, 887 ; Srivara iii-191.



the normal price was 203 *dinaras* could not be had for less than 1050 *dinaras*.<sup>1</sup> A harrowing account of a devastating flood which resulted in a severe famine is given while narrating the events of the rule of king Partha. In the year A.D. 917-18, the "whole autumn rice crop was destroyed by a flood."<sup>2</sup> Under Harsa, a flood devastated the Valley in the year 1099 A.D., resulting in "an extreme scarcity of all wares."<sup>3</sup> During the reign of Jayasimha the "land was deluged by a flood poured forth by the clouds of the rainy season, and land and water became level . . . The earth became like a drinking cup filled with water instead of spirit, the trees on it immersed so that only their tops were visible."<sup>4</sup>

The inevitable consequence of a flood was a severe famine. But there was another cause too of the latter calamity seizing the people of Kashmir off and on. An early fall of snow would destroy the ripe autumn crop, as for instance during the time of Tunjina I, when snow fell as early as September destroying the rice crop, the staple food of the people. It is said that a divine intercession following the prayers of the queen saved the famine-stricken people from total annihilation.<sup>5</sup>

We have already noticed the occurrence of famines during and before the rule of Avantivarman and his measures to prevent floods, their primary cause ; and also increase the area of land for cultivation. But during the rule of Partha the floods were so severe that they carried away the last grain of ripened paddy, resulting in a severe famine. Kalhana gives a pathetic picture of the people who were struck by this awful calamity :

"One could scarcely see the water in the Vitasta, entirely covered as the river was with corpses soaked and swollen by the water in which they had long been lying. The land became densely covered with bones in all directions, until it was like one great burial-ground, causing terror to all beings."<sup>6</sup>

Following the floods in the year A.D. 1099, there was a severe famine in Kashmir, when "a *khari* of rice was bought for 500 *dinaras*, and two *palas* of grape-juice cost one *dinara*. A *pala* of wool was sold at six *dinaras* ; of salt, pepper, assafoetida and other articles it was difficult even to hear the name." There was a fearful loss of life and "the water of the streams was covered with the dead."<sup>7</sup>

1 *Raj.*, v-70-71.

2 *Ibid.*, v-271.

3 *Ibid.*, vii-1219.

4 *Ibid.*, viii-2786-87.

5 *Ibid.*, ii-17.

6 *Ibid.*, v-271-77.

7 *Ibid.*, vii-1219-21.

Man was also responsible for a severe famine in the Valley during the reign of Sussala, when the forces of the Damaras under the command of the pretender Bhiksacara besieged the city of Srinagar and set fire to its food stores which had been brought into the city in lieu of land revenue. Even "the nobles who received no money from the royal household while the king was in distress, perished also quickly, in that famine."<sup>1</sup>

### STANDARD OF LIFE

But it was not always in distress that the people of Kashmir passed their days. We have ample evidence furnished by the *Rajatarangini* and other old texts to show that the people of ancient Kashmir were of refined taste and led quite a comfortable life with good food, drink, clothes and ornaments and spacious houses.

Rice was, as now, the staple food of Kashmiris in ancient times. As mentioned earlier, *dhanya* (grain) denotes rice and a scarcity of this commodity invariably resulted in famine. We have in Kshemendra's *Narmamala* references to various preparations in rice, e.g., boiled-rice, rice mixed with sugar and sugarcane, cakes of rice and dried rice-meal.

Barley seems to have formed the food of the poorer classes and mainly of agriculturists who bore the brunt of heavy taxation. Pulses too were an important item of food. We have mention of *cana* (gram) and lentil. A special preparation from ground *mung* was the *papara* or cake.

Vegetables seem to have been assiduously cultivated. We have mention of *aramika* or vegetable cultivator in the *Rajatarangini* and also irrigation and manuring of vegetable gardens. Vegetables growing wild in the forests and meadows like *kachidani* and *upal-hak* also seem to have been consumed by poorer classes.<sup>2</sup> Mutton, however, was freely eaten. We have mention in the *Rajatarangini* of "fried meat" being taken by people. The flesh of the fowl and the ram (*kukūta* and *mesa*) and perhaps also of the goat was eaten.<sup>3</sup> Game birds and fish were freely consumed. Marco Polo informs us that the food of the people of Kashmir was flesh with rice and other grains.<sup>4</sup>

Fruit, of which there was an abundance, formed an important article of diet. Heun Tsiang mentions pear, the wild plum, the peach, the apricot and the grape as being cultivated in profusion in Kashmir.<sup>5</sup>

1 *Raj.*, viii-1206-8.

2 *Ibid.*, v-48, 49.

3 *Narmamala*, I, 124.

4 Yule, *Marco Polo*, Vol. I, p. 166.

5 *Si-yu-ki*, Vol. I, p. 88.

Grapes were particularly valued as fruit and were also used in brewing wine. Drinking of wine seems to have been quite popular. Kalhana's Chronicle is full of references to people, men and women, who were addicted to drink. Far from being prohibited, wine seems to have been recommended specially on ceremonial occasions.<sup>1</sup> The wine, cooled and perfumed with flowers, was appreciated as a delicious drink.<sup>2</sup>

Milk undoubtedly comprised one of the principal items of diet. Cows and buffaloes were kept by ordinary householders. Various preparations of milk like *ghee*, butter, and curds (*dadhi*) were known.<sup>3</sup> Honey and sugar were used to sweeten the milk and other foods.<sup>4</sup>

Among the spices used may be mentioned black-pepper, ginger and assafoetida. The chewing of betel leaf seems to have been a popular luxury among the rich. The king and his countries were ever found to be chewing the betel-leaf, which owing to prohibitive cost of transport from Central India was a mark of affluence and aristocracy.<sup>5</sup>

#### DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

In the seventh century A.D., Heun Tsiang gives the following description of the dress of North India "where the air is cold":

"The men wind their garments round their middle, then gather under the armpits, and let them fall down across the body, hanging to the right. The robes of the women fall down to the ground; they completely cover their shoulders. On their heads the people wore caps, with flower-wreaths and jewelled necklets".<sup>6</sup>

From the specimens of Graeco-Gandharan sculpture unearthed at Ushkur and Akhnur, can be had an idea of the dress worn by people during and after the Kushan rule. A fine silk or cotton garment hemmed in at the middle and falling loose to the ankles was the common dress of men and women. This is further corroborated by the figure depicted on terra-cotta tiles of the 4th century A.D. found at Harwan. One of the tiles has the figure of a lady carrying a flower vase, who wears a transparent robe, a kind of close fitting turban and large ear-

1 *Nilamatpurana*, 450-54.

2 *Raj.*, viii-1866-67.

3 *Nilamatpurana*, 461-68, 471-77; *Narmamala*, I 127; II, 80; *Desopadesa*, III, 32; *Raj.*, viii-137, 140.

4 *Narmamala*, I, 123, II, 80; *Raj.*, vi-140.

5 *Raj.*, iv-427; v-365, vii-544, 787, 945, 1067.

6 *Si-yu-ki*, trans. Beal, Vol. I, p. 148.



rings. Another tile shows a female-dancer wearing loose robes and trousers while a third one has a figure of a female musician dressed in puffed-up trousers. Some of the male figures are dressed in loose fitting trousers and Turkman caps. All this shows a marked influence of Central Asian dress, which seems to have become the fashion after the first century A.D.<sup>1</sup>

But with the growth of influence from the plains of India during the Karkota rule, we find from the *Rajatarangini* the advent of a short jacket or blouse with half sleeves and a long lower garment, the tail end of which touched the ground.<sup>2</sup> A long robe hanging down the shoulders to the knees, tied up at the waist with a girdle or belt formed the dress of menfolk. The climate of the Valley being cold, the people wore woollen garments with thick blankets in the case of poorer, and warm fine blankets in the case of rich urban classes, over the shoulders.<sup>3</sup> To keep themselves warm they used the Kangri (*Kasthangarika*), fire-pot, under their garments.<sup>4</sup> We find white turbans worn by the people during the rule of later Hindu kings. Leather shoes were generally worn by men, while rich women had the fashionable "peacock shoes."<sup>5</sup> Wooden sandals were common.<sup>6</sup>

The eternal fondness of women to adorn themselves with ornaments found expression in ancient Kashmir also. Kalhana mentions necklaces, wristlets, armlets, bracelets and ear-rings being the favourite ornaments of women.<sup>7</sup> A special type of armlet called *Valaya Kalapi* and ear-ring called *Kanaka-nadi* have been referred to in Damodargupta's *Kuttanimata Kavya*. An armlet with the face of a peacock (*Valaya Kalapi*), a palm-shaped small ear-drop (*Kanaka-nadi*) seem to have been much in vogue. King Harsa introduced new fashions in dress and ornaments among his courtiers and queens. These included the Ketaka-leaved tiaras (*Svarna-ketapatranka*), pendants on forehead (*Tilaka*) and golden strings at the end of locks.

Nor were the ladies backward in toilet and make-up. They used camphor, sandal and saffron as emollient and perfume.<sup>8</sup> They reddened the feet and lips with lac and applied collyrium to the eyes. Fashions in hairdressing seem to have been changing from time to time. Coiffures were decorated with flowers and gold thread.

We have a striking picture of the ornaments worn by women during the Kushan and later periods from a study of the terra-cotta

1 Kak, *Ancient Monuments in Kashmir*.

2 *Raj.* vii-930.

3 *Raj.*, iv-349-52

4 *Raj.* v 106.462.

5 *Desopadesa*. VI

6 *Narmamala*, I, 110

7 *Raj.* v-380 : vii-928-31 : viii-2835.

8 *Nilamatpurana*, verse 550 : *Kuttanimata Kavya* verse 101.

figures found at Ushkur and other places in the kingdom. On a fragment of statuary we find an arm with a beaded armlet which seems to have been connected by a similar band with the necklace. Another forearm has a bangle round the wrist. Another fragment of a left-hand has a finger ring. A figure of Avalokiteshwar from Pandrenthan shows a three-peaked diadem, and elaborately jewelled necklace, and a jewelled girdle. On a Vishnu image found at Avantipura we find a crown with a three-peaked diadem. Kalhana mentions that king Ananta's crown had a "diadem adorned with five resplendent crescents."<sup>1</sup>

### HOUSES

A critical study of the *Rajatarangini* shows the Kashmir of ancient times as full of villages and towns. From the large number of towns, villages and cities founded by kings, queens and courtiers, it appears that the kingdom was densely populated. Being a cold place, it can be easily surmised that all had a roof to live under. Whereas the kings and their courtiers had their palatial houses to live in, the masses had timber houses and huts. Even the mendicants had their own houses. A large number of *viharas*, temples, hospices and *mathas* provided shelter to the poor in society. Foreign students lived in hostels specially built for them.<sup>2</sup>

From the excavations conducted recently at Burzahom, we learn that the earliest inhabitants lived in pits, covered with roof of grass. But in later periods we have literary evidence of well-planned and will-laid-out towns and cities. Srinagar, originally founded by Pravarasena II, was, for instance, "provided with regularly arranged markets" and was full of "mansions which reach to the clouds."<sup>3</sup> In fact one of the five characteristics of Kashmir's renown was its "lofty houses."<sup>4</sup> The houses of the rich were built in quadrangles (*catuhsalu*) with large compounds in the middle. There were, as one of the tiles at Harwan depicts, balconies and verandas, and sloping roofs with lofts.<sup>5</sup> Urban houses were definitely better than those built in the villages.<sup>6</sup> The latter had courtyards surrounded by a wall and there was invariably a small garden of vegetables and fruit trees attached to it. The hut had a mud floor and the rooms were "full of mosquitoes where the seat was a place strewn with grass."<sup>7</sup>

1 *Raj.*, vii-195

2 *Ibid.*, iii-9.

3 *Ibid.*, iii-358-59.

4 *Ibid.*, i-42.

5 *Ibid.*, i-246.

6 *Ibid.*, iv-349-52.

7 *Ibid.*, vii-8662.

Timber being available freely in the Valley, the houses were mainly built of it. Frequency of earthquakes was also responsible for general use of timber in construction. This exposed the cities and towns to the danger of fires. We have mention of several devastating fires in the *Rajatarangini*, which clearly indicates the abundant use of timber in the construction of dwelling houses in Kashmir.

#### FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

The people celebrated a number of festivals, chief among which was the Shivratri. Held on the thirteenth day of the dark fortnight of Phalguna (Feb-March), the festivities connected with it extended to several days. The king observed the festival with great eclat and "flooded his people with presents, just as Indra floods the earth with rain at the conjunction of planets."<sup>1</sup> Feasts were held and dancing and singing performances given by the court artistes. Poetic symposia at which outstanding compositions of poets were applauded and their authors suitably rewarded,<sup>2</sup> were a regular feature.

Another important festival, still known in Kashmir, was the Indra-dvadasi, held on the twelfth day of the bright half of Bhadra (September), which was the day of pilgrimage to the sacred sites of the Varahaksetra at Baramula. This was naturally a festival of universal rejoicings, coincide as it did with the ripening and harvesting of the rice crop. It was an ancient festival and combined with the Nagayatra festival held on the fourth of the same fortnight, was also a very popular one. A detailed account of its celebration is given by Srivara in his life of Zain-ul-abidin, who himself used to take part in the festivities.<sup>3</sup>

An old and popular festival deriving its origin from the ancient tradition of people leaving the Valley in winter and coming back on the advent of summer, was that of Asvayuji held on 15th day of Asvina. Elaborate customs prescribed for this festival are given in the *Nilamat-purana*, 391 sqq. People had to amuse themselves by throwing mud at each other, by indulging in abuse and playing jokes in order to frighten away the Piscacas who were supposed to attempt to enter the homes of men on that day. This custom, now entirely forgotten, is comparable to the modern Holi festival and is often mentioned by Kalhana. People enjoyed this day by witnessing jugglers' performances, horse-play and exhibition of feats of strength.<sup>4</sup> The festival

1 *Raj.* viii-70.

2 *Ibid.* viii-119.

3 *Raj.* viii-170, 182 : *Nilamatpurana*, 792 : *Kings of Kashmir*. p. 123-24

4 *Raj.* iv-710 ; vii-1551



is also referred to by Alberuni.<sup>1</sup>

Apart from these special festivals there were many more traditional ones, like the new year's day in Caitra, and the pilgrimages to several *tirthas* in the Valley. Alberuni mentions that Kashmiris celebrated Lalitaditya's victory over the Tibetans every year on the second of Caitra,

The common people had also other means of amusing themselves. Strolling musicians and players, theatrical and dancing performances in the temples as well as horse-play, jugglers' shows are often mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*.<sup>2</sup> A passage in the Chronicle tends to show that the common people witnessed theatrical performances under the open sky. When caught by a downpour, they would disperse pell-mell in all directions. A tile from Harwan represents a female musician playing on a drum and another depicts a danseuse in a dancing posture. We have mention of music and dancing in the *Nilamat-purana* too. The kings were great lovers of dancing and music. King Harsa, for instance, was not only a lover of music and dancing, but an adept at these arts too. He composed songs and set them to music. He personally taught dancing girls and actors and gave music lessons to pupils. Bharata's *Natyasastra* was commented upon by Kashmirian authors and there is evidence to show that dancing as an art was assiduously cultivated by ladies of rich families. There were luxurious theatrical halls fitted with leather-cushioned seats and the palace and the temple had a *natyamandhapa*, a dancing and theatrical hall, as essential part of their architecture.<sup>3</sup>

And for the poorer classes there were folk-songs, folk-dramas and music. Modern *Chhakri*, the popular music played to the accompaniment of brass and earthen vessels, seems to have an ancient origin.<sup>4</sup> At marriage feasts, sacrifices and other festivities the folk musicians were in great demand.<sup>5</sup>

Pilgrimages to holy places in India undertaken by religious minded people were a regular feature of life in ancient days. We have a record in the *Rajatarangini* where it is mentioned that Kashmiris were freed of pilgrims tax at Gaya by the munificence of Ermantaka, a resident of Parihaspura, as also by Kandarpa the commander-in-chief of king Harsa.<sup>6</sup> Similarly pilgrims and students from other parts of India visited Kashmir and we have mention of several kings and queens building hostels for their residence.

1 *India*. ii-p., 180.

2 *Raj.*, vii-59.

3 *Raj.*, vii-707, 717, 858.

4 *Raj.*, viii-891.

5 *Ibid.*, vii-515.

6 *Ibid.*, vi-254-55 : vii-1008.

## CONVEYANCES

The conveyance of the early Kashmir was mainly the horse. Kashmir had a fine breed of horses as there are numerous references to swift steeds, to prancing horses and to mounted troops (*asvavara*).

It has already been mentioned that because of the alpine nature of the kingdom, and the consequent difficulty in making and maintaining roads, there were no wheeled carriages in Kashmir till as late as the last quarter of the 19th century. Carriage of goods and passengers in the Valley was mainly done by boats, of which there are several references in the *Rajatarangini*.<sup>1</sup>

And for the carriage of the rich and nobility there was the famous litter. Alberuni remarks that the "noble among them (Kashmiris) ride in palanquins called *Katt* carried on the shoulders of men."<sup>2</sup> Kalhana depicts the litter-carriers as belonging to an inferior class of labourers.

To cater to the needs of the infirm, aged and the sick there were numerous charitable institutions like *mathas*, hospices and hospitals. There is a record of a hospital having been built by king Ranaditya.<sup>3</sup> A hospice for the convenience of travellers was founded by Vakpusta,<sup>4</sup> and another by king Baladitya on the Pir Panjal pass.<sup>5</sup> Queen Isanadevi the wife of Lalitaditya, constructed several wells, "the water of which was pure as nectar", for the poor and thirsty.<sup>6</sup>

The standard of life of the people of ancient Kashmir seems to have been fairly high and in no way inferior to people living in the rest of India. For, it is only in congenial social and economic environments that the arts of peace can flourish. And the fact that ancient Kashmir made outstanding contributions to literature, philosophy, art and achitecture of India proves that the people had more spacious times to live in.

1 *Raj.* v-84, vii-347, 714, 1628.

2 *Ibid.* iv-407 : v-33, 219 : vii-478 : viii-2298. 2636. 2674. 3145.

3 *Ibid.* iii-461.

5 Stein, trans. of *Rajatarangini*, p. 395.

4 *Ibid.* ii-58,

6 *Raj.*, iv-212.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ART AND CULTURE

"THE BEAUTIFUL GREECE," observes Younghusband, "with its purple hills and varied contour, its dancing seas and clear blue sky, produced the graceful Greeks. But Kashmir is more beautiful than Greece. It has the same blue sky and brilliant sunshine, but its purple hills are on a far grander scale, and if it has no sea, it has lake and river, and the still more impressive snowy mountains. It has, too, greater variety of natural scenery, of field and forest, of rugged mountain and open valley. And to me who have seen both countries, Kashmir seems much the more likely to impress a race by its natural beauty. Has it ever made any such impression? Are there no remains of buildings, roads, aqueducts, canals, statues, or any such mark by which a people leaves its impress on a country? And is there any literature or history?"<sup>1</sup>

Certainly - there are the ruins of temples and buildings all over the Valley, remarkable for their Egyptian solidity, simplicity and durability, as well as for what Cunningham describes as their graceful elegance, the massive boldness of their parts, and the happy propriety of their outlines. And Kashmir has the unique distinction of possessing an unbroken historical record from ancient times to the present day. In the field of literature and philosophy it stands second to none in the rest of India, for, in the words of the Chronicler, 'learning, lofty houses, saffron, grapes and icy water—things which are difficult to get in heaven, are common here.

### HOME OF SANSKRIT LEARNING

In ancient times Kashmir was the 'high school' of Sanskrit learning and scholars from all parts of India came to the Valley to study at the feet of great teachers and savants. "For upward of two thousand years," declares Grierson, "Kashmir has been the home of Sanskrit learning and from this small Valley have issued masterpieces of history, poetry, romance, fable and philosophy. Kashmiris are proud and justly proud of the literary glories of their land. For centuries it (Kashmir) was the home of the greatest Sanskrit scholars and at least one great Indian religion, Saivism, has found some of its most eloquent

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1 *Kashmir*, pp. 115-16.



teachers on the banks of the Vitasta. Some of the greatest Sanskrit poets were born and wrote in the Valley, and from it has issued in the Sanskrit language a world-famous collection of folk-lore."<sup>1</sup>

How and when Kashmir became a centre of Sanskrit language and learning is an interesting study in itself. According to one theory the eastern part of Iran was the region where the Aryans lived as long as they formed one people. The Indo-Aryans after their arrival in Afghanistan migrated in due course to the Punjab and the Gangetic Plains. We have already noted the immigration of Indo-Aryans from the Punjab into the Valley, and with the suppression of the earlier immigrants from the north by the more civilized Indo-Aryans, Sanskrit became the language of religion and polite literature, until in the words of Bilhana "even women in Kashmir spoke Sanskrit and Prakrit quite fluently."

In the age of Ashoka when Buddhism was carried to the Valley, the texts and literature of the new religion were written in Sanskrit, in contrast to those written in Pali in the rest of India. With the development of Mahayana the entire Buddhistic literature was composed in the Sanskrit language and it was perhaps because of this that Sanskrit was diffused in Central Asia by the numerous Buddhist missionaries from Kashmir. We have already noted the great part played in this movement by Kumarajiva and his band of Kashmiri Buddhist scholars and as a result of this activity Kucha became a centre of Sanskrit learning in Central Asia. In recent years a large number of Sanskrit manuscripts written on birch-bark have been discovered in the vast regions of the Central Asian uplands and the only lot of Sanskrit Buddhist manuscripts ever discovered in India has come from Gilgit in Kashmir.

Not only did students from the rest of India come to the Valley for higher studies, but we find pilgrims and scholars from Central Asia and China coming to Kashmir to study Sanskrit texts. Heun Tsiang spent two years in the Valley studying Buddhist texts in Sanskrit and so did the earlier scholars Che-mong and Fa-yong. Ou-kong spent four years in Kashmir and studied Sanskrit and Vinaya from three teachers.

In the age of Ashoka, Sanskrit was written both in the Kharosthi and the Brahmi script. In Kashmir the scholars developed a script of their own—the Sarada—which though differing from the Devanagari in details, follows it, in its essentials. In the 9th century A.D. the Tibetans who had no script for their language adopted the Sarada

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1 *Linguistic Survey of India*, Vol-II, part 2.

script of Kashmir.

Birch-bark was widely used for both literary writings and Government correspondence and commercial transactions. It was also used for packing parcels and lining roofs to make them watertight. The ink used for writing on birch-bark was prepared by a special process so that it might not get faded or washed off by water. Birch-bark likewise is not affected by damp. This way many old manuscripts by being hidden in wells and pits escaped destruction at the hands of many an ignorant and unscrupulous ruler.

Kashmir occupied the pride of place in having a large number of libraries of Sanskrit manuscripts. Temples and *Viharas* were the repositories of these literary treasures, but there were huge private libraries too, maintained by families having literary traditions. Even as late as 1875 when George Buhler went to Kashmir in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, and when Sanskrit learning there was not as flourishing as in ancient times, he found more than twenty-two Sanskrit speaking Pandits as well as traders and officials who were 'possessors of most considerable collections of manuscripts.'<sup>1</sup>

#### GRAMMAR AND PROSODY

The development of Sanskrit language was an object of special study with the pandits of Kashmir. They made important contribution to the study of Vedic literature, grammar and philology. *Ubbat-bhasa* is a learned exposition of the text of *Sukla-yajurveda*. Panini's monumental work on Sanskrit grammar, the *Astadhyayi*, was commented upon by PATANJALI in his *Mahabhasya*, a work of unrivalled importance on grammar. He is said to have lived in the second century B.C. and the Kashmiri tradition, upheld by several scholars, claims him as having been born in the village of Godra in the south of the Valley.<sup>2</sup>

The study of *Mahabhasya*, however, seems to have received a set-back towards the beginning of the first century A.D. Bhatrhari mentions Baiji, Sauva and Haryaksha, who by their uncritical methods did much to push the *Mahabhasya* to the background.<sup>3</sup> However, in about the fourth century A.D., during the reign of Abhimanyu, CANDRACARYA and his colleagues brought back into general use the study of *Mahabhasya* which in the absence of competent teachers or correct text had become difficult and disused. Candracarya founded

1 Buhler, *Report*.

2 Pandit Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p 96.

3 *Vakyapadiya*, ii-489-90

4 *Raj.*, iv-488.

through his work *Candra-vyakarna* a school of Sanskrit grammar called the Candra, second in importance to that of Panini.

Kalhana refers to a similar restoration of the study of Patanjali's great grammatical work under Jayapida. His teacher in grammar, KSHIRASWAMIN, son of Isvarswamin, wrote his well-known commentary on the *Dhatupatha* or the study of verbs, and other smaller grammatical treatises, still extant.<sup>1</sup> That Kshiraswamin was a Kashmiri is proved by a passage in the *Vamsastuty* appended by Rajanaka Ananda to his commentary on *Naisadcarita* (composed 1654), where he is claimed to be one of the great scholars produced by the Rajanaka family of Kashmir, along with KAYATTA, UVATTA, and MAMATTA.<sup>2</sup> KAYATTA, son of Jayatta and a brother of Mamatta, has also given us *Mahabhasyapradipa*, a guide to the study of *Mahabhasya*.

Another commentary on Panini's work, *Kasikavritti*, written jointly by JAYADITTA and VAMANA, two Kashmiri grammarians, has been mentioned by I-tsing in the seventh century A.D. Two other Kashmiri grammarians, BHATTA JAGADHARA the author of *Balabodini* and CHIKU BHATTA of *Baghuvritti*, propagated the teachings of the Katantra school, which though founded outside Kashmir had many adherents in the Valley.

In metrics and prosody Kashmiri authors have made valuable contribution to Sanskrit language and literature. PINGLACARYA, the author of the well-known work on metrics, *Pingala*, was a Kashmiri and so was KEDARA BHATTA who wrote *Vrittaratnakara*, used widely after *Pingala*. Another work on metrics, *Suvritta-tilaka* was the work of the well-known Kashmiri author, KSHEMENDRA. Mamatta, his later contemporary, wrote a book entitled *Savdavyaparacarca*.<sup>3</sup> In the field of lexicography also Kashmir's contribution is considerable. The *Anekarthakosa* of MANKHA is of special importance and is an improvement on preceding authors like Amarasimha. The latter's works were commented upon by Kshiraswamin in his treatise entitled *Narmalinganusasanam*.

#### POETICS

Both according to their own account and according to the admissions of the learned in India, the Kashmirians were formerly as distinguished in the 'Alankara-Sastra', or poetics, as in poetry, and produced a long series of writers on this subject. There is nothing surprising about it, for in a beautiful valley like Kashmir, the accent

1 *Raj.*, iv-489.

2 See Buhler's Poona Mss Coll. 1875-76, No. 143, fol. 673.

3 The manuscript is in the Dacca University Library.



must necessarily have been on the pursuit of beauty in all its aspects. The Kashmirian writers did not only develop some of the earlier schools of poetics that were born in other parts of India such as *Rasa*, *Alankara*, *Riti*, *Vakroti* and *Aucatyā* but made original contribution to the science of poetics with their theory of *Dhvani*.

The *Rasa* school, based on the famous aphorisms of Bharata (*Natyasastra*), found its exponent in LOLLUTA, a contemporary of king Jayapida (9th century A.D.). SANKUKA, his contemporary, improved upon Lolluta's theory that *Rasa* belonged to the performer only, by explaining that it was related to the spectators as well. A further explanation of *Rasa* was given by BHATTIA NAYAKA by calling it in its final state as communion with the Highest Spirit. ABHINAVAGUPTA's definition of *Rasa* is that it is His manifestation.

BHATTIA UDBHATTIA, the court pandit of king Jayapida wrote profusely on the *Alankara* school. His *Kavyalankaravrtti*, now lost, and *Alankarasangraha* deal in detail with the definitions and explanations of forty-one *Alankaras*. RUDI ATTA (9th century A.D.) reviews the whole field of poetics in the sixteen chapters of his extensive work, *Kavyalankara*.

The *Riti* school had its exponent in VAMANA, a minister of Jayapida. In his work *Kavyalankara-Sutra* he asserts that *Riti* is the soul of poetry. He is the first to distinguish between *Guna* and *Alankara* and thus his work is an improvement on Dandin.

As against this assertion we have the claim of *Vakroti*, a striking mode of speech, to being the soul of poetry, put forth by its originator, RAJANAKA KUNTALA. In his work *Vakroti-jivita*, he lays emphasis on this aspect of poetics. But the theory has been severely criticised by another great writer on this subject, RAJANAKA MAHIMA BHATTIA, in his *Vyakti-viveka*.

KSHEMENDRA, the polymath of Kashmir, has written on another theory of poetics, that of *Aucatyā*, which he illustrates in his works called *Aucatyavivara* and *Kavikantha-baran*.

But it is for their theory of *Dhvani*, a unique contribution to the science of poetics, that the Kashmirian authors deserve credit. The first propounder of this school was ANANDAVARDHANA, who in his *Dhvanyaloka* asserts that it is *Dhvani* that is the soul of poetry. According to Kane, "the *Dhvanyaloka* is an epoch-making work in the history of *Alankara* literature. It occupies the same position in poetics as Panini's *Astadhyayi* in grammar and Sankaracarya's commentary on Vedānta."

## ANANDAVARDHANA AND THEORY OF 'DHVANI'

Anandavardhana's literary activity falls within the years 860-890 A.D., which almost coincides with the reign of king Avantivarman. It may well be described as the most prosperous age in the political and cultural history of ancient Kashmir. It was in this atmosphere of creative endeavour when sculpture, music, architecture and poetry reached new heights, that Anandavardhana found the inspiration for his epoch-making theoretical work. His own equipment was also amazing ; in him was combined wealth of scholarship and erudition, with natural grasp and intuitive insight. His works reveal the vast range of his studies ; in them we find quotations from all the important writers of antiquity. His interests were varied—poetry, drama, philosophy, theology, ancient lore, Buddhist classics ; he was equally familiar with them all. Besides his major work on aesthetics, and his poetical compositions, he was also the author of a learned commentary on Buddhist Logic, a Tibetan translation of which is available though the original is lost. He was regarded as an eminent poet, and Kalhana mentions him alongside Sivaswamin and Ratnakara, as a poet rather than a philosopher.

Anandavardhana's masterpiece, *Dhvanyaloka* or the "Light of Suggestion", marks the beginning of a new age in aesthetics. It consists of two main portions—the 'Karikas', in which the fundamental principles are stated in a condensed form, and the 'Vrittis' or the detailed prose comments on the former. Discarding the *Alankara* and *Guna* theories of Bhamaha and Dandin respectively, which lay stress on ornamental qualities and figures of speech in poetry, he asserts that all the aspects of art can only be harmonised if we grasp with absolute clarity the difference between the language of art and the language of ordinary usage. The fact that even a plain statement of an ordinary event, if made by a poet or an artist, appeals to us, and moves us, shows that artistic representation works upon us *indirectly*, and in a more subtle fashion than ordinary communication. This suggestiveness, or the capacity to produce subtle impressions, Anandavardhana calls 'Vyanja katva' and the type of poetic or artistic composition in which this quality is successfully utilised is called "Dhvani". Quoting his own words, "those types of artistic creations are designated 'Dhvani' by the experts, in which the obvious words and meanings are subordinated, and other delightful ideas are suggested, such as we see in the masterpieces of great poetry."

It is interesting to see that while Anandavardhana was later universally revered as a great 'Acarya', he had to face the opposition of some of the lesser poets at Avantivarman's court. Anandavardhana's

genius aroused the jealousy of one JAYANTA, who derided him as a "self-conceited pedant." But who takes Jayanta's derisive remarks seriously today ?

During the hundred years between the exposition of his *Dhvani* theory by Anandavardhana and its final establishment by Abhinavagupta, writers on aesthetics continued to devote their attention to the theory. In spite of the geographical isolation of Kashmir, the theory was quickly noted by scholarly circles all over India, and we hardly come across any important writer on aesthetics who could ignore it.

The first among the Kashmiri successors of Anandavardhana in aesthetics proper, was MUKLA BHATTA, son of BHATTA KALATTA mentioned in the *Rajatarangini*.<sup>1</sup> He wrote a book called *Abhidhavarittri-matrika*. Apart from other problems, it is interesting to see that it contains a discussion on the use of words in their various primary and secondary senses, a branch of speculation that has today come in for a good deal of emphasis at the hands of European writers on "semantics".

Anandavardhana's theory came in for direct criticism by Mukula Bhatta's pupil PRATIHARENDURAJA who harked back to the views of Udbhatta, the leader of the *Alankara* school. Another critic was BHATTIA NAYAKA, an elder contemporary of Abhinavagupta and the author of *Hridayadarpana*. This book which is now known to us only through quotations of others, was considered a valuable contribution to aesthetics.

Bhatta Nayaka was a revivalist and upheld Bharata's views that the 'Soul of poetry' was the experience of the reader to be one with the subject through poetic words and expressions rather than by suggestion of 'Dhvani'. Bhatta Nayaka in spite of his revivalism could be very modern on occasions. He laid great stress on the distinction between Poetry on the one hand and Scripture or Mythology on the other. The latter, he pointed out, might give us moral injunctions or valuable information, but only Poetry can give us aesthetic pleasure.

Abhinavagupta's teacher, BHATTA TAUTA also wrote on aesthetics. His literary activity falls between the years 950—980 A.D. but his best known work *Kavyakautuka* on which his famous disciple wrote a commentary is unfortunately lost. He attempted to show that when a great dramatic poem is staged or read, all the three 'parties' namely the author, the actor and the reader or spectator pass through essentially the same emotional experience. He was the first to emphasise the importance of the peaceful emotion—'Shanta Rasa'—which occupies such an important place in later aesthetic writings.

1 *Raj.* v-66.



## ABHINAVAGUPTA

It was, however, Abhinavagupta, the famous poet, critic, philosopher and saint of Kashmir who wrote profusely on aesthetics. Like a drama moving to its climax, aesthetic thought in Kashmir moved to its highest pitch in the writings of Abhinavagupta, undoubtedly the greatest figure in the history of Indian aesthetics. He was one of those very few individuals who have earned as much reverence for the sublimity of their character as for the magnitude of their intellectual achievements. Even now his name is uttered by unlettered villagers in Kashmir with the deepest respect. It is believed that near the village of Magam on the Gulmarg road, he 'entered samadhi' with twelve hundred of his disciples.

In a family full of traditions of scholarship, Abhinavagupta was born some time between 950 and 960 A.D. His ancestor Atrigupta, a reputed scholar of Kanauj, came to Kashmir at the invitation of Lalitaditya and settled permanently in the Valley. Abhinavagupta's grandfather, Varahagupta, and his father, Narsinghagupta, were both well known for their vast learning. From his mother Vimalakala he inherited a deep interest in spiritual practices.

In his childhood, however, Abhinavagupta faced a calamity in the death of his mother and then renunciation of this world by his father. But being gifted with a strong will, he pursued his studies with uncommon zeal. Fortunately he came across teachers of versatile genius. Some of them were versed in Buddhist lore and scripture, others were Jains while still others were Saivas. He studied metaphysics, poetry, aesthetics and took lessons in practical exercises of Yoga. With a rare passion for truth, Abhinavagupta through years of superhuman toil, mastered all branches of knowledge.

Then began his own creative activity. He studied all the Tantric texts from the point of view of Kashmir Saivism and the result of his labours was his famous work, *Tantraloka*. In his second phase he made a study of all the schools of poetics and produced his famous work on aesthetics, *Abhinavabharati* and *Locana*, a commentary on Anandavardhana's *Dhvanyaloka*. In the third and final phase he was drawn towards metaphysical problems and made his own important formulations which raised Kashmir Saiva philosophy to its highest level and secured for it a permanent place in the history of human thought.

Abhinavagupta remained a celebate all his life, and in his later years virtually became an ascetic. "This, however," observes Dr. V.S. Naravane, "should not give the impression that he was far removed from the domain of practical human experience. He was a close

observer of life and his extraordinary memory enabled him to carry in his mind all the impressions he had gathered from books, conversations with teachers and friends, and his own experience." His works abound with references to joys and sorrows of human life. He shows interest in flora and fauna of the Valley and sings with joy of the beauty of the Vitasta meandering slowly through paddy fields and orchards and trees and villages of Kashmir. He does not hesitate to mention the kinds of wine brewed in Kashmir nor to talk of the physical beauty and complexion of women. In him we find the sage, scholar and man.

In the field of aesthetics Abhinavagupta attempted a double synthesis. He considered one by one the points touched by the 'Rasa' and 'Dhvani' schools and making them self-consistent and complete sought to write them in the one stream of thought. His *Abhinavabharati*, a voluminous work of over a thousand pages, deals primarily with the 'Rasa' theory and the problems raised by it, whereas his *Locana* is concerned with the points raised by Anandavardhana.

Apart from this, his own contribution is the enunciation of *Shanta Rasa*, the mood of serenity and peace, as the ultimate end of art. In his own words, "all emotions, when their exciting conditions are present, emerge from *Shanta*, and when these conditions are withdrawn they again merge into *Shanta*."

Abhinavagupta's disciple, MAMATTACARYA also made considerable contribution to poetics. He took his early education at Banaras. His famous work *Kavyaprakasa* possesses such merit that it has been commented upon by more than seventy ancient and modern scholars. It covers the whole ground of rhetoric, deals with the merits and demerits of poetry, the functions of different words and their sources and the figures of speech. He champions the theory of *Dhvani* and attacks with vehemence the upholders of other schools of poetics. His independence of judgement and originality of thought in this field are well known.

The tenth chapter of *Kavyaprakasa* has been continued by his pupil ALLATA. MANIKYACANDRA has written the first and most reliable commentary on *Kavyaprakasa*. RAJANAKA RUYAKA, who lived in the twelfth century A.D. wrote *Alankarasarvasva* and ably summarised the views of the early writers. He has also written *Alankara-anusarini*, *Sahridaya-lila*, *Sanketa-tika*, a commentary on *Kavyaprakasa*, *Vyaktiviveka-vicara*, a commentary on *Vyaktiviveka* of Mahima Bhatta, and *Nataka-mimansa*.

This does not, however, exhaust the list of Kashmirian writers on poetics which would run to hundreds. It is obvious that the whole

literature of Sanskrit poetics has been permeated by their contributions of original works in this field.

#### POETRY AND DRAMA

Kashmir has produced a galaxy of poets and dramatists in Sanskrit. Influenced by the natural beauty of their homeland, its lofty mountains, lakes, waterfalls and charming flowers of multitudinous colours, they wrote dramas, epics, lyrical as well as dialectic poems, mythological poems, essays, fiction and anthologies.

It is indeed a pity that Sanskrit compositions of Kashmirian poets and authors prior to the sixth century A.D. have not so far been discovered, though from the highly developed style and thought of the compositions of the eighth century and onwards it can safely be deduced that these must have been the product of a long period of creative culture. In fact the *Rajatarangini* mentions a number of poets and dramatists who flourished long before the beginning of the Christian era. One, named CANDAKA is said to have been a great poet, though no specific work is attributed to him. He may be the same Candaka to whom some verses are ascribed in BALLABHADEVA'S *Subhasitavali*. Kalhana records that he flourished in the reign of Tunjina and his plays attracted large audiences.

Another great poet mentioned by Kalhana is BHARTRMENHA who was honoured by Matrigupta, himself a poet, for writing the famous poem *Hayagrivavadha* by "placing below the volume a golden dish, lest its flavour might escape."<sup>1</sup> This famous poem is unfortunately lost but Bharttrmentha is mentioned by Kshemendra in the *Suvrtatilaka* and by Mankha in *Srikanthacarita* (ii-53). The latter places him by the side of Subandhu, Bharavi and Bana. Verses are quoted under his name in Srivara's *Subhasitavali* and latter anthologies. Dr. Bhaudaji found verses from *Hayagrivavadha* quoted in RAGHAVA BHATTA'S commentary on *Sakuntala*.

MATRIGUPTA, the patron of Bharttrmentha, who ruled Kashmir for some time as the nominee of Vikramaditya of Ujjain, has been supposed by some scholars to have been no less a person than Kalidasa himself. That Matrigupta was a poet and a historical character is proved by his commentary on Bharata's *Natyasastra* which is referred to in SUNDARASIMHA'S *Natyapradipa*. Kshemendra quotes Matrigupta in one of his works and some of his verses have found a place in Vallabhadeva's anthology.

But the arguments in favour of the identification of Matrigupta



with KALIDASA are not convincing. These are chiefly based on the synonymy of the two names, Kalidasa and Matrigupta (*Kali : matr, dasa : gupta*), on the absence of any mention of Kalidasa in the *Rajatarangini* and on the attribution to Kalidasa of the Prakrit poem *Setubandha* composed at the request of a king Pravarasena. The latter was assumed to have been Pravarasena II, Matrigupta's successor. Professor Max Muller has reproduced these arguments in his *India*, (pp. 312-347), but has in the same place indicated the grave objections which preclude the acceptance of this identification.

If, however, Matrigupta cannot be identified with KALIDASA, there is a strong presumption in his being a Kashmiri by birth. He is said to have flourished during the latter half of the fifth or the first half of the sixth century A.D. His reference to Huns in Kashmir in the *Raghuvamsha* and other references to the climate and products of the Valley, form the basis of Pandit Lachmi Dhar Sastri's theory of Kashmir being the birth place of the famous poet-dramatist of Sanskrit literature. His exhaustive research on the subject may be summarised thus :<sup>1</sup>

- (a) Kalidasa's affectionate description of the rice fields and the songs associated with the rice fields.
- (b) His description of a living saffron plant which is grown in Kashmir and which no non-Kashmirian writer is known to have described.
- (c) His description of the Devadaru forests, lakes, tarns, glades, caves with lions, musk-deer on the higher altitudes.
- (d) His reference to some sites of minor importance in Kashmir which were till recently considered as imaginary, but which modern research has identified with their ancient names. The sites are only of local importance and could not be known to one who was not in close touch with Kashmir.
- (e) Kalidasa's description of Kashmir in the *Sakuntala* in which he refers to the lacustrine origin of Kashmir, which is commonly known to Kashmiris.
- (f) His reference to certain Kashmiri legends such as that of *Nikumbha* which are known only to Kashmiri writers.
- (g) Kalidasa's personal religion which was the Kashmir Saivism based on the doctrine of the Pratyabhijna philosophy unknown outside Kashmir then. Though this philosophy was developed in its refined form towards the end of the eighth

<sup>1</sup> Lachmi Dhar, *The Birth-Place of Kalidasa*, Delhi University Publications No. 1 (1926).

century A.D., there is no doubt that this tendency of thought existed long before its systematization by Somananda.

DAMODARAGUPTA, a famous poet and moralist, was the chief councillor of king Jayapida. Most of his poetical compositions are lost, but he is quoted in several anthologies. His well-known book *Kuttanimita Kavya* which is fortunately still extant is a practical treatise on erotics and being full of interesting stories throws a flood of light on contemporary life.

KING JAYAPIDA was the patron of Bhatta Udbhatta, his court poet known chiefly for his writings on aesthetics. He also wrote the poem *Kumarasambhava*. Though not surviving now, some verses of it are found in his *Alankarasangraha*. Kalhana mentions names of MANORATHA, SAMKHADATTA, CATAKA and SAMDHIMAT who also flourished at his court. Verses of Manoratha are quoted in Vallabhadeva's *Subhasitavali*. The works of the other three poets are not traceable now.

Another famous poet of the eighth century A.D. was Sankuka who composed a historical poem called *Bhuvanabhyudaya* depicting the fierce battle for ascendancy between the brothers Mamma and Utpala, the maternal uncles of Cipattajayapida, in which "the flow of the Vitasta was held up by the floating corpses of the warriors falling in the battle-field." The work is not available now, but quotations from it are included in *Sudhasitavali* of Vallabhadeva, and also in *Srangadharapadati* and *Suktimuktavali*. Sankuka's name has also been referred to in the fourth chapter of the *Kavyaprakasa* where his opinion on a point of poetics is considered authoritative.

Some of the Karkota kings were poets themselves. Apart from a mention of this fact in the *Rajatarangini*, we find fragments of poems written by MUKTAPIDA and JAYAPIDA preserved in *Subhasitavali*.

Avantivarman's reign was the glorious period of Kashmirian art and architecture. At his court flourished a number of famous poets. Besides the well-known Anandavardhana whose works have already been noted as the founder of the 'Dhvani' school of aesthetics, there were SIVASWAMIN, RATANKARA and MUKTAKANA. Sivaswamin seems to have been a Buddhist and wrote a poem named *Kapphinabhyudaya*, of which the theme is the Buddhist legend in which the Buddha intervenes in a feud between Daksinapatha and Prasanjit of Sravasti. At the end of the war, which resulted in his victory, Kapphina accepted Buddhism and renounced his worldly attachments. Some of the verses of Sivaswamin are quoted in Kshemendra's *Kavyakanthabharana* and Vallabhadeva's *Subhasitavali*, which illustrate Sivaswamin's spirited description of the assembly of chieftains, who wring their hands in fury at aggres-

sive designs of the foe, protest against the policy of procrastination and apathy and plead for an immediate drastic action.

Ratnakara or with his full name Rajanaka Ratnakara Vagisvara, is the author of the great Kavya *Haravijaya*. Composed under king Cippatajayapida the poem runs into fifty cantos and narrates the story of the slaying of demon Andhaka by Siva. The excellence of this work which employs a large variety of metres, matching the sound to the sense, has been praised by several ancient scholars outside Kashmir like the poet Rajasekhara. Besides the *Haravijaya*, Ratnakara is credited with the composition of two smaller poems, *Vakroti-Pancasika* and *Dhvani-gathapancasika*.

None of the compositions of Muktakana are now traceable. He is known otherwise only from quotations in two treatises of Kshemendra. Another poet whose mention is made by Kalhana was BHALLATA the author of the extant *Bhallatasataka*, a poem of 108 stanzas dealing with morality and conduct. He lived during the reign of king Samkaravarman. Verses from this work have been quoted by Abhinavagupta, Kshemendra and Mamatta.

It is not unlikely that king Samkaravarman who was also known by the name of Yasovarman, composed some poems himself. A lost drama entitled *Ramabhyudaya* written by one Yasovarman, which is cited by Anandavardhana in his *Dhvanyaloka*, probably belongs to him. Some verses written by a poet called Yosavarman and preserved in *Kavindravacana Samuccaya* and *Subhasitavali*, may also be ascribed to him.

ABHINANDA, son of Jayanta Bhatta, who lived in the first half of the tenth century A. D., composed *Kadambari-Kathasara*, a metrical summary of Bana's famous prose romance. Abhinanda in his introduction to the poem traces his descent to one Sakti who had emigrated from Gauda (Bengal) and settled in the south of Kashmir Valley.

The polymath KSHEMENDRA was a poet, moralist, historian, critic, and fable writer, all combined in one. A pupil of Abhinavagupta, he was born in a well-to-do family, some time towards the end of the tenth century A. D. His father's name was Prakasendra and his grandfather's Sindhu. He was widely read and his studies comprised all the sciences and arts then known in Kashmir. He had a thorough knowledge of mathematics, astrology, medicine, surgery, politics, erotics, Saivism and Buddhist philosophy. Though, as he says, he did not enjoy the company of dry logicians and grammarians, he yet studied all the lexicons of his day. He seems to have been fond of songs, novels and interesting conceits of poetry.



Kshemendra's productions are as varied as his studies. His *Bharatamanjari*, *Ramayamanjari*, *Brhatkathamajari*, *Padyakadambari* and *Avadanakalpalata*, are abstracts from the epics Mahabharata and Ramayana, Gunadhya's *Brihatkatha*, Bana's *Kadambari* and the Buddhist *Avadanas*. Several of his works have been lost, among which is the *Nrapavali*, a history of Kashmir referred by Kalhana in his Chronicle. His extant works include *Nitikalpataru*, *Carucarya*, *Nitilata*, *Vinayavali*, *Darpadalana*, *Sevysevakapodesa*, *Munimatmimansa*, *Caturvarga-Samgraha*, *Aucatyavicaracara*, *Kavikanthabharana*, and *Dasavataracarita*.

Kshemendra's contribution to Sanskrit literature is unique in one respect. He introduces social satire, mixed with humour and sarcasm. His *Samayamatrika* is a poem of eight chapters narrating the story of the wanderings of a courtesan in the Valley. It is an interesting specimen of satire rarely found in Sanskrit literature, on strolling musicians, women beggars, shopgirls, saints, thieves and other classes of people. His *Kalavilasa* depicts various occupations and follies of the people of the time, such as physicians, traders, astrologers, goldsmiths, harlots and saints. His *Darpadalana* condemns pride which is said to spring from birth in a good and rich family, wealth, learning, beauty, valour, charity and asceticism. Kshemendra's *Desopadesa* exposes all kinds of sham in society through his caricatures of the life of various depraved sections of the community, such as cheats, misers, prostitutes, bawds, voluptuaries, students from Gauda (Bengal), old men married to young girls, degraded Saiva Gurus, etc. The *Narmamala* is a sharp satire on the oppression practised by the Kayasthas.

Kshemendra's *Brhatkathamajari* is a faithful summary of the now lost *Brhatkatha* of Gunadhya in 7,500 stanzas. It is not merely a condensed version of the original work, but the author has interpolated his own descriptions and writings at several places.

An equally famous poet was BILHANA who left Kashmir in the reign of Kalasa (1043-89 A. D.) and rose to great prominence at the court of the Calukya king Parmadi Vikramaditya Tribhuvanamalla, who appointed him as the "Chief Pandit (Vidyapati) and when travelling on elephants through the hill-country of Karnata, his parasol was borne aloft before the king."<sup>1</sup> He has immortalised his patron in his *Vikramankadevacarita* which is perhaps one of the first Sanskrit poems having an historical approach.

From the last canto of his famous 'kavya' we learn that his birth-place was Khonamusa (modern Khonmuh), a village six miles to the

1 *Raj.*, vii-935-37.

south-east of Srinagar. His father Jyesthakalasa and his mother Nagadevi took particular care of his education and he acquired proficiency in grammar and poetics. At the time of the nominal rule of Kalasa, he set out for the plains of India to seek fame and fortune. He visited Mathura, Kanyakubja, Prayaga and Banaras. He stayed for some time at the court of Krishna of Dahala and later attracted by the fame of the courts of Dhara and Anhilwad, he left for the latter place where he seems to have stayed for a brief period. From there he went to the sacred shrine of Rameswara and on his way back, reached the court of Kalyan, where his talents were recognised by the king who installed him to the high position of Vidyapati.

The *Vikramankadevacarita*, glorifying king Vikramaditya Tribhuvanamalla of Kalyan (1076-1127 A. D.), is a poem of eighteen cantos opening with an eulogistic account of the Calukya dynasty and depicting with usual amplifications 'the conquests of Vikramaditya before his accession to the throne, his dethronement of his elder brother Someswara II, his defeat and capture of his younger brother and his numerous wars with the faithless Colas.' Though it has a historical theme, it is in all essentials only a 'kavya' and not a history.

His *Karnasundrya*, though written as a romantic tale, actually delineates in a complimentary fashion the marriage of the Calukya Karnadeva of Anhilwad.

Another poem, generally ascribed to Bilhana, is *Caurasurata-Pancasika*, of fifty amatory verses, sung in the first person, on the topic of secret love. A masterpiece of emotional richness, it shows the author in his best as a writer of lyrical melody.

Bilhana's treatment of an historical theme in the form of a 'kavya' was imitated by another Kashmiri poet, SAMBU, who lived in the court of king Harsa. His *Rajendra-Karnapura* is a high-flown panegyric eulogising his patron and his *Ayokti-muktalata* is a collection of verses on various topics.

Another poet of the same category was JALHANA who left the Valley at the accession of Uccala and took service at the court of king Somapala of Rajauri, on whose life and history he wrote a 'kavya' entitled *Somapalavilasa*. His *Mugdhopadesa* is a poem ethical in character.

MANKHA the renowned poet who served under Jayasimha is known by his poem *Srikanthacarita*, written between the years 1135 and 1145 A.D. The subject of the poem is the Puranic legend of Siva's overthrow of Tripura. But as usual several cantos are devoted to poetic descriptions of the seasons, the sunset, sunrise, court scenes, amuse-

ments, etc. We also learn from the third canto of the poem something of the family and personal life of the poet. He was the son of Visvavrata and had three brothers, all occupying responsible posts with the government of the day. When he completed the poem, he put it before an assembly of thirty contemporary scholars, poets and officials where it was publicly read. The list of poets and scholars given by Mankha shows that Kashmir of the twelfth century continued to be a centre of Sanskrit learning. One of the scholars was Kalyana (Kalhana) the celebrated author of the *Rajatarangini*. A notable historical data revealed by Mankha's enumeration of the people in this literary gathering is the presence of two ambassadors, Suhala, sent by Govind Candra, the Rathor of Kanauj (who according to his inscriptions reigned between 1120 and 1144 A.D.), and Tejkantha sent by Aparaditya, the lord of the Konkans, whose inscriptions are dated 1185 and 1186 A.D. The mention of the latter showing that political connections existed between Aparaditya and Kashmir during the period 1135 and 1145 A.D. is of great interest, for, it proves that the reign of Aparaditya must have been of long duration, and reduces the gap in the history of the Silharas after Sri Mamvani's inscription dated 1060 A.D. very considerably.<sup>1</sup>

Mankha is the author of a Sanskrit dictionary, a mention of which has already been made.

Among the minor works which were composed during the last years of the Hindu rule, mention may be made of *Haracarita-cintamani* of JAYADRATHA, written probably in the twelfth or thirteenth century. The poem in the 'kavya' style relates in thirty-two cantos some legends connected with Siva and his incarnations. Placed in some of the famous *tirthas* of Kashmir the legends incidently describe these sacred sites and help in the reconstruction of ancient geography of the Valley.

Sanskrit poetry continued to flourish in Kashmir even in the thirteenth century. Jonaraja mentions a poet SAKA who flourished at the court of Samgramadeva (A.D. 1235-52) and composed a poem with his patron as its hero.

The deep religious tendency among Kashmiris inspired them to write devotional songs. Some of the famous poems of this category are *Vakroti-pancasika* of RATNAKARA, *Devisataka* of ANANDAVARDHANA, *Stotravali* of UTPALA, *Sivamahimnah* of PUSHPADANTA and *Stuti-kusmanjali* of JAGADHAR BHATTA.

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1 Buhler, Report.



## HISTORICAL LITERATURE

We have already dealt in detail (Chapter Two) the importance of Kashmir in the field of historical compositions in ancient times. The *Nilamatpurana* is a story of pre-historic Kashmir. KALHANA's *Rajatarangini* occupies a unique position as the only work on history in Sanskrit with a scientific approach of modern historians. Yet Kalhana was not the first in this line. He mentions the works of eleven preceding historians whose compositions he consulted in producing his famous work. Among the early historians, whose works unfortunately cannot be traced, were HELARAJA, PADMAMIHRA, CHAVILLAKARA, SUVRATA and KSHEMENDRA. Kalhana's tradition was continued by others in this line—JONARAJA, SRIVARA, PRAJYABHATTA and SUKA. That Kashmiri writers possessed an historical sense is proved by BILHANA's *Vikramanka-devacarita* which though composed in the 'kavya' style was yet superior in historical approach to the works of Baṇa and Hemachandra.

## MEDICINE

There are some original works on medicine too. Perhaps as a result of the presence of rich flora and fauna in the Valley, the Vaidyas of Kashmir were inspired to conduct research in the science of medicine. Professor Sylvan Levi after discovering Buddhist manuscripts in Central Asia and China, came to the conclusion that the famous CARAKA the author of *Carakasamhita* belonged to Kashmir. The recension of the text available to us today was done by DRIDHABALA, a scholar of Kashmir. JEJATA, the author of the commentary on the *Carakasamhita*, was also a Kashmiri, and so was UDBHATTA who commented upon *Susrutasamhita*.

To erotics Kashmir has made notable contribution. VASUNANDA whom Kalhana mentions as a king ruling in Kashmir after Mihirakula, wrote a book on erotics. *Ratirahasya*, a scientific text-book dealing with the problems of sex, both biological and psychological, was written by a Kashmiri pandit, the famous KOKA, the son of Tejoka. After *Kamasutra* of Vatsyayana it is a very important work on this subject. KALYANAMALLA, the writer of *Ananga-ranga* and KUCIMARA, the reputed writer of *Tantra* were both Kashmiris. Another writer on this subject was DAMODARGUPTA, Jayapida's minister, whose *Kuttanimata Kavya* is an excellent poetical work dealing with the ethics of concubinage.

Several works on *nyaya* have been composed by Kashmirian authors. JAYANTA BHATTA who seems to have lived during the reign of Samkaravarman (A.D. 883—902) wrote three books, *Nyayamanjari*, *Nyayakalika* and *Agamadambara*, the latter being the first philosophical play in Sanskrit.

## FABLE LITERATURE

Kashmir has a long tradition of story-telling that goes back to dim antiquity. One may speculate as to why such a tradition should have developed in the Valley to an almost incredible extent. Is it because a peaceful atmosphere and secluded existence encouraged talent in this direction? Was this talent further strengthened by the long winter months of inactivity, when men had the leisure to weave fact and fancy together?

Whatever the reason might be, many of the world's best-known tales have originated in Kashmir. Apart from Gunadhya's legendary *Brihatkatha*, which is no longer extant, and SOMADEVA's *Kathasaritasagara*, many other collections of stories were produced among which KSHEMENDRA's *Brihatkathamajari* and a version of *Pancatantra* known as *Tantrakhyayika* are particularly significant.

SOMADEVA who may be described as one of the founders of fiction and whose work has reached the remotest corners of the world in one form or another, wrote his masterpiece for the edification of queen Suryamati, the wife of king Ananta (1028-1063). It is based on the *Brihatkatha*, and written in flowing narrative style, makes delightful reading. Without doubt it is the largest collection of stories in the world. The number of stanzas alone, not counting the prose passages, is more than 22,000; it is twice as big as the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* put together.

The *Kathasaritasagara*, besides being a version of the lost work of Gunadhya, also carries most of the stories contained in the *Pancatantra*. This version is different from the original and Hertel has advanced a strong case in favour of Kashmir being the original home of the *Pancatantra* stories.

KSHEMENDRA's *Brihatkathamajari* which though written earlier, does not come up to the standard of Somadeva's work, but it is a valuable and entertaining collection of fables. The Kashmirian *Brihatkatha* from which both Kshemendra and Somadeva drew their inspiration, was most probably not the *Brihatkatha* of Gunadhya. It seems to have been an older Kashmirian version which had undergone considerable changes. This is evident from the divergence of the works of the two Kashmirian authors with that of the Nepal version of Buddhasvamin's *Brihatkathasamgraha*.

It is interesting to note that several anthologies on various topics as love, nature, conduct, etc., from the works of eminent Sanskrit poets and authors were compiled in ancient Kashmir. Apart from their value

as giving specimens of some of the best compositions in Sanskrit literature, they supply a clue to the existence of several eminent poets whose works cannot otherwise be traced. VALABHADEVA has compiled *Subhasitavali* containing 3,527 verses in 101 sections with quotations from 360 authors. JALHANA has compiled *Suktimuktavali* quoting 380 poets. It seems that the preparation of anthologies was a cultivated art with Kashmirians.

Prolific literature on Buddhist religion, law and polity, was produced by Kashmirian authors and 'Acaryas', a detailed survey of which has already been given in Chapter Four above.

### KASHMIR SAIIVISM

We have already traced the part played by Kashmirian philosophers in the development of Mahayana, and the impact of Saivism on the Buddhistic philosophy of Arhatship and disciplinary control of thought and action enjoined by it for the attainment of Nirvana or liberation from the circle of birth and death. Mahayana which may rightly be called a synthesis of the concept of Siva and Sakti and of the early Buddhistic philosophy, attained singular popularity and became a powerful philosophic-cum-religious force not only in Northern India, but also in Central Asia and China. By the end of the eighth century, however, Buddhism seems to have lost much of its pristine glory and was slowly being supplanted by the re-emerging Brahmanic thought and philosophy in India. For Buddhism never ousted Brahmanism from any large part of India. The two systems co-existed as popular religions all along, right from the death of Buddha, and in Kashmir as we have already noted the two religions had in fact no separate existence. Even when by the end of the ninth century A.D. Buddhism had had its day in the rest of India, it still continued to have its influence in Kashmir and along with Brahmanism enjoyed patronage of the kings and their court.

### PERIOD OF RELIGIOUS FERMENTATION

But there was a time when the influence of Buddhism was deeply resented. Especially after the reign of Kanishka, when under Nagarjuna's leadership Buddhism became firmly established,<sup>1</sup> the Saiva philosophers thought that an organised attempt was necessary to counter the preachings of 'Sunnyavad' or agnosticism of the Buddhists. The only doctrine which could have proved strong and vigorous enough to serve the purpose was the absolute idealism of the Advaita school. We,

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<sup>1</sup> *Raj.*, i-173, 177.



therefore, find that many of the older writings of Saiva philosophers were deliberately re-interpreted and modified in the direction of Advaita.

This was no doubt strengthened by a wave of Brahmanic revivalism raised as a result of SANKARACARYA'S preachings in the rest of India. Though there is no direct evidence of his having visited the Valley, and its only description occurs in the *Sankaradigvijay*, it has been pointed out by many scholars that this visit might have in fact taken place. In a period when Kashmir was at the height of its material and cultural prosperity, the visit of such an outstanding and dynamic personality as Sankaracarya can well have been a certainty. No doubt we find echoes of his impress and influence in the writings of Kashmirian philosophers like Utpalacarya and Abhinavagupta.

So we find a great fermentation of philosophic and religious thought in the Kashmir of eighth and ninth centuries. Already besides Buddhistic philosophy based mostly on Samkhya there were several other schools of philosophy flourishing in Kashmir. Dualism had its exponents in Sadyojyoti, Brihaspati and Sankarananda. This school had become so powerful that the great Abhinavagupta to refute their tenets had to write a book entitled *Bhedavada-Vidharma*.

It was in such a milieu that the monistic philosophy of Kashmir Saivism took shape until it attained the status of a distinct school of philosophy differing so fundamentally from the other systems of Saivism that Madhavacarya in his *Sarva-darsana-sangraha* does not include it under *Saiva-darsanas* but deals with it as *Pratyabijna-darsana*.

#### ORIGIN OF THE TRIKA

Kashmir Saivism, known as Trika-Sastra or simply Trika, and more rarely, also as Rahasya-Sampradaya and Tryambaka-Sampradaya, is so called either because it accepts as most important the triad, *Siddha*, *Namaka* and *Malini*, out of the ninety-two Agamas recognised by it ; or because the triad consisting of Siva, Sakti and Anu, or again of Siva, Sakti and Nara, or lastly, of the goddesses Para, Apra and Paratpara is recognised ; or because it explains three modes of knowledge of Reality, viz., non-dual (*abheda*), non-dual-cum-dual (*bhedabeda*), and dual (*bheda*).

The system has two main branches, Spanda or Pratyabijna. In fact many classics of the school include the word Spanda or Pratyabijna in their very titles. The Trika is also known as Svatantryavad, Svatantrya and Spanda expressing the same concepts. 'Abhasavad' is

another name of the system. It is called Kashmir Saivism, because the writers who revealed it and enriched its literature belonged to and flourished in Kashmir. Indeed the doctrine of the Trika may be regarded as a permanent and enduring heritage which Kashmir has contributed to the rich treasure of Indian philosophy.

The Trika is essentially a spiritual philosophy, because its doctrines regarding Reality, the world, and man are derived from a wealth of spiritual experiences. Its greatest exponents were *Yogins* of high stature who had wonderful insight into abstruse points of philosophy. It has been recognised in India and other countries that various kinds of discipline, which may be generally called *Yoga*, reveal the mystery of the inner being and nature of man, as also the art of using the powers of knowledge and action hidden at present in unknown regions of our being and nature. The Trika is a rational exposition of a view of Reality obtained primarily through more-than-normal experiences of *Yoga* and divine revelation.

Although the Trika form of Saivism would seem to have made its first appearance in Kashmir at the beginning of the ninth or perhaps towards the end of the eighth century A.D. *Sivasasana* or *Sivagama*, that is Saivism as such, is far older than this date. Indeed we can trace its beginnings in the Vedic Revelations. The *Rajatarangini* mentions the existence of Siva shrines and temples long before the advent of Buddhism in the Valley under Ashoka. According to the belief and tradition of the Kashmir Saivas, all *Sastras* which are but thoughts expressed as speech, originally existed as unuttered thought and experience of the Supreme Deity. Next, on the manifestation of universe, began the All-transcending Word (Para Vak), which put forth another form, that of *Pashyanti* or Vision of the Whole Universe. With the progress of the manifestation of the Universe came the *Madhyana* or middle one which served as a link between the *Pashyanti* and the next below stage of *Vaikhri* or 'flowing art of' speech. And what are called the *Saiva Sastras* are nothing but this Divine stream of spoken words.

#### LITERATURE ON TRIKA

The origin of the earliest Saiva works in Kashmir is lost in antiquity. It is said that there were originally sixty-four systems of philosophy covering every aspect of thought and life, but they all gradually disappeared and the world was plunged into spiritual darkness. Then Siva, goes the legend, moved by pity for the ignorance and sufferings of mankind, appeared on the Kailasa mountain in the form of Srikantha. He commanded the sage Durvasa to spread true knowledge among men. Durvasa created three sons by the power of his mind

and to one of these, the Tryambaka, he imparted the knowledge of monistic philosophy.

The literature of the Trika falls into three broad divisions ; the AGAMA SASTRA, the SPANDA SASTRA, and the PRATYABHJANA SASTRA.

The Agama Sastra, regarded as of superhuman authorship, lays down both the doctrine (*Jnana*) and the practice (*Kriya*) of the system. They are believed to have come down (*agama*) through the ages, being handed down from teacher to pupil. Among the works belonging to this *Sastra* are a number of *Tantras*, of which the chief ones are : *Malini Vijaya*, *Svachchanda*, *Vijnana-bhairava*, *Ucchusma-bhairava*, *Ananda-bhairava*, *Mrgendra*, *Matanga*, *Netra*, *Naisvasa*, *Svayambhuva*, and *Rudra-yamala*. These were interpreted mostly as teaching a dualistic doctrine, to stop the propagation of which the *Siva-Sutra*, expounding a purely Advaitic metaphysics, was revealed to a sage called VASUGUPTA (c. 900 A.D.). On these *Sutras* there are the *Vritti*, the *Varttika* by Bhaskara, and the commentary called *Vimarsini* by Kshemaraja.

The exact date of Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir Saivism, is not known for certain. But since his disciple according to Kalhana lived at the end of the ninth century A.D.<sup>1</sup>, he may also be placed near about the same period. Most of his works are now lost. His *Spandamata* and his commentary on the *Bhagavadgita* may perhaps be traced in the works of later writers on Saivism. About the personality and lineage of Vasugupta, all that we learn from his pupils is that he lived in retirement as a holy sage in Sadarhadvana (modern Harwan), behind the Shalimar Garden on the Dal Lake.

We are told in the *Siva-sutra-vimarsini*, that Vasugupta, while residing in his hermitage below the Mahadeo peak, had one night a dream in which Siva appeared and disclosed to the sage the existence of certain Sutras—embodying the essence of the *Siva-Sasana*—inscribed on a rock lying at a certain spot in the valley below the Mahadeo peak. The inscribed side which was turned downwards would, if he approached the rock early the next morning and touch it, turn round and the Sutras would be revealed to him. Vasugupta as directed in the dream found the rock which on his touch turned round, revealing the Sutras to the sage who learnt them by heart and propagated them to the “world immersed in spiritual darkness.”<sup>2</sup>

1 *Raj.*, v-66.

2 The rock known as Sankarpal is still lying in the valley above Harwan, but there is no trace of any inscription on it.



A different version of this tradition has been recorded by some writers. Kshemaraja records that the *Siva-Sutras* were not found inscribed on the rock but were revealed to Vasugupta in a dream by Siva Himself. However this may be, and however Vasugupta may have obtained them, it is clear that the *Siva-Sutras* as taught by him laid the foundation of the Advaita Saivism of Kashmir.

The *Spanda-Sastra* lays down the main principles of the system in greater detail and in a more amplified form than the *Siva-Sutras*, without entering into philosophical reasonings in their support. Of the treatises belonging to this *Sastra* the foremost are : the *Spanda-Sutras*, generally called *Spanda Karikas* ; and the *Vritti* which together with the former, is called the *Spanda-Sarvasva*.

KSHEMENDRA (c. 1015 A.D.) attributes the *Spanda-Sutras* to Vasugupta himself, but most probably they were composed by the latter's pupil, KALLATA.

It is clear from all accounts that the chief agent by whom Vasugupta had his teachings promulgated was Kallata who spread their knowledge by writing commentaries on the *Siva-Sutras*. According to Kalhana, he 'descended to the earth for the benefit of the people' during the reign of Avantivarman (A.D. 855—883). He wrote a commentary called *Spanda-Sarvasva* on his teacher's *Spandamrita*. His two other books, *Tatvarta-Cintamani* and *Madhuvahini*, both of them now lost, were commentaries on the *Siva-Sutras*.

There are several commentaries on the *Spanda-Sutras*. RAMAKANTHA, a pupil of the great UTPALA, (900—950 A.D.) has written the *Vritti*. UTPALA VAISNAVA has commented upon the *Spanda-Sutras* in his *Pradipika* and Kshemaraja has written the *Spanda Samdoha*, a commentary on the first *Sutra*, but giving the purport of the whole work.

#### PRATYABIJNA-SASTRA

From the above it would appear that Vasugupta did no more than simply transmit the *Sutras* with their meanings to Kallata who spread their knowledge by writing explanatory treatises on them. In the *Spanda-Sarvasva* he 'gathered together' the meaning of the *Siva-Sutras* and together with his other commentaries on the latter, handed them down to his pupil PRADYUMNA BHATTA (c. 900 A.D.) who was also a cousin of his, being the son of his maternal uncle. Pradyumna Bhatta in his turn handed the teaching to his son PRAJNARJUNA and he to his pupil MAHADEVA. The latter again transmitted it to his son SHRIKANTHA BHATTA from whom BHASKARA, son of Divakara, received them and wrote his *Varttika* on them. In the *Varttika* of Bhaskara,

therefore, we have what Kallata must have taught as the meaning of *Siva-Sutras*—a mere religious doctrine without entering into any philosophical reasoning in its support.

Yet in a country like India, where philosophic reasoning has from early times played such an important part, it was essential for any system of religion to give full philosophical reasons in its support, if it was at all to hold its own especially in an age when Buddhism exercised such a great influence as it did in Kashmir about the time the Advaita Saivism as represented by the Trika made its appearance. This need must have been felt almost at the beginning—a need which was not met by the writings of Kallata. So the philosophical side was attended to by Somananda, who like Kallata may have been a pupil of Vasugupta himself. While Kallata may be said to have handed down the doctrine as a system of religion, Somananda supplied the logical reasoning in its support and made a system of Advaita Philosophy of what was at first taught as a system of faith. And thus was founded the Pratyabijnasatra which may be regarded as the philosophy proper of the Trika. It deals rationally with the doctrines, tries to support them by reasoning and refutes the views of the opponents. The originator of this Sastra, the SIDDHA SOMANANDA (c. 850—900 A.D.) was most probably a pupil of Vasugupta. He is also spoken of as the originator of reasoning (*Tarkasya-karta*) in support of the Trika.

His work which lays the foundation of the philosophy of the Trika was the *Siva-dristi*. He also composed a *Vritti* on this work, but this, with other works of his are now only known by name and from quotations from them.

Somananda tells us a good deal about his lineage. He claims to have descended from the sage Durvasa through the line of that sage's son Tryambaka. The nineteenth generation of the latter (first fifteen being 'mind born') was represented by Ananda of whom Somananda was born.

We know from ABHINAVAGUPTA the period when Somananda must have lived. Narrating his own succession from Somananda in the line of discipleship, Abhinavagupta says that Somananda's pupil was the famous Utpala, son of Udayakara. He was followed by LAKSHMANA GUPTA (c. 950-1000 A.D.) who was the teacher of Abhinavagupta. We know that the latter lived in the first quarter of the eleventh century and thus Somananda must have flourished towards the end of the ninth century A.D.

Thus it will be seen that the origin of both the *Faith* and *Philosophy* of Kashmir Saivism—as the teachings of the Agama and

*Spanda Sastras* on the one hand and of the *Pratyabijna Sastra* on the other may respectively be called—had their birth towards the end of the eighth or the beginning of the ninth century A.D. ; and they were founded by men who were regarded as holy sages.

The work of Somananda was carried on in greater detail by UTPALA who wrote *Pratyabijna-Sutra* which may be regarded as the basic book of Kashmir Saivism containing in its essence all the fundamental ideas which were later elaborated by Abhinavagupta. This is the first use of the word *Pratyabijna* and the very high status of this work may be inferred from the fact that after it was written, the entire system came to be known as '*Pratyabijna-Sastra*'. And finally, gathering together the literature upon the subject and creatively developing and correlating all the fundamental ideas, Abhinavagupta raised the Kashmir Saiva philosophy to its highest pinnacle. His *Tantraloka* and *Pratyabijna-Vimarsini* though claiming to be mere expositions of the *Pratyabijna-Sutra*, are original works of very high merit.

Among the subsequent writers on the '*Pratyabijna-Sastra*' may be mentioned KSHEMARAJA, YOGARAJA, JAYARATHA and SIVOPADHYAYA.

KSHEMARAJA, a pupil of Abhinavagupta, wrote the *Siva-sutra-vimarsini* and several other works. YOGARAJA who was a pupil apparently of both Abhinavagupta and Kshemaraja is the author of a commentary on Abhinavagupta's *Parmartha-Sara*. JAYARATHA who lived in the twelfth century A.D. wrote a commentary on *Tantraloka* and SIVAPADHYAYA who came much later (18th century A.D.) commented upon Abhinavagupta's *Vijnana-bhairava*.

After this date we do not find any great writer on Saivism of Kashmir, although its study and practice was and to some extent still is, continued by outstanding pandits of Kashmir.

In addition to the three main divisions of the Saiva literature we have a number of devotional compositions called "*Stotras*" which give expression to the philosophical doctrines of the system in a devotional form : and also a number of compositions in the daily practices and ceremonials to be performed by a Saiva. The latter keep the doctrine a living force in the every-day life of the great mass of Kashmir Brahmans who are the followers of this cult.

Kashmir Saivism has now attracted the attention of theologians and scholars in the rest of India and abroad and has become an object of serious study by them. It is, in fact, "a virgin field of research, and will repay the most conscientious labour of philosophers



for many years to come.”<sup>1</sup>

#### THE PHILOSOPHY OF TRIKA

Unlike other forms of Saivism, the Trika is essentially a monistic doctrine. In this it is much in consonance with the Advaitic Vedānta. This emphasis on monism may be as a result of the influence of Sankaracarya, but we must at the same time recognise that Kashmir Saivism has also fundamental differences with Vedānta as preached by the great Sankara. It does not, for instance, emphasise either the infallibility or the eternity of the Vedas and Upanisadas, nor does it deny the reality of the world.

Abhinavagupta boldly asserts that he must give first place to facts of experience, second to reason and only third place to the scriptures. This attitude towards the Vedas can perhaps be explained by the fact that Kashmir Saivism has absorbed much of the influence of Samkhya and Buddhism. The first is semi-heterodox, being atheistic and the second frankly heterodox. This influence of heterodox philosophies particularly of Buddhism, has resulted in a liberal attitude in extending the right of philosophical knowledge to all sections of society, irrespective of sex, caste or position.

The Vedānta holds that appearances are unreal and illusory, and that the one reality is what lies behind them all, the Brahman. Their presence is only due to *Māyā* and will continue only till *Moksha* (salvation) is attained. They then cease to exist. The Trika, on the other hand, holds that appearances are real, in the sense they are aspects of the Real and emanate from it. Nothing can exist outside Paramesvara and appearances thus cannot be unreal. They cannot be merely the creations of *Māyā* or illusion.

#### ABSOLUTE REALITY

The ultimate Reality is variously designated in Trika as Atman, Cit, Caitanya, Siva, Paramasiva. It is the true and innermost Self in every being, is a changeless reality of the nature of a purely experiencing principle, as distinguished from whatever may assume the form of either the experienced or of the means of experience. It is pure Consciousness, Self-consciousness, integral or supreme Experience, the benign “One, the highest Good and Bliss, the Supreme Lord, formless and yet informed with all forms, and free from all limitations in space and time.”<sup>2</sup>

1 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, p. 79.

2 *Tantrasara*, p. 6.

Reality is ineffable and beyond all descriptions, yet the Trika tries to formulate a philosophy about Its nature. But this philosophy is, it should be understood, not regarding the Reality as It is in Itself, but only as the creator or manifestor of the universe.

And, as the underlying reality in everything, Siva is all-pervading; and at the same time all transcending. He has primarily a two-fold aspect—an immanent aspect in which He pervades the universe, and a transcendental aspect in which He is beyond all universal manifestations. Indeed, the universe with all its variety of objects and means of experience is nothing but a manifestation of the immanent aspect of Paramasiva Himself. It has no other basis or ingredient in itself.

#### SIVA AS SAKTI

This aspect of His is called Sakti (Power), which, being only an aspect is not in any way different from, or independent of, Paramasiva, but is one and the same with Him. Like fire and its burning power, Siva and Sakti are the same identical fact, though they are spoken as distinct. Considered as purely transcendent, Siva is *sava*, dead as it were ; but in truth there is perfect equilibrium between Siva and Sakti, and as such the integrality is designated as Paramasiva. If anything, Sakti is His Creative Power, and is spoken of as His feminine aspect.

#### SAKTI-TATTVA OR IDEAL MANIFESTATION

In the Trika philosophy we find a lot of emphasis laid on the qualities of 'Prakasa' and 'Vimarsa' the attributes of the individual as well as the Universal Self. 'Prakasa' is the capacity of the Self to serve as a 'mirror' of psychical images. It 'shines' just as a mirror which reflects a lamp, becomes itself luminous. 'Vimarsa' is Sakti, it is vibration ; it is Siva's awareness of Himself as the integral and all-comprehensive ego. When there is the reflection of Siva in Sakti, there emerges in His heart the sense of 'I'. 'Vimarsa' refers to the capacity to know itself in all its purity. The Universal Self also shines and knows Itself; but whereas the individual self is affected by external cause, the Absolute can shine only by Its own light.

Thus, while 'Vimarsa' is taken to be the cause of the manifestation and dissolution of the universe, it is so only in the wider sense of being Sakti and not as the reflection as 'I'. Or, in other words, while everything is a manifestation out of 'Vimarsa', everything does not have 'Vimarsa'. A jar or a pot, for instance, does not have 'Vimarsa' or the sense of 'I'. So the more of self-consciousness one has, the more of 'Vimarsa' also one has and thus is nearer to Siva or pure Consciousness. That is why the practical discipline of the system enjoins the

development of the sense of 'I' as being the whole, as identical with the universe.

And since Cit, Illumination, cannot be without Self-consciousness, It therefore sees Itself in Sakti which is compared to a mirror. Sakti is thus Siva's power of turning upon himself. *Cit-Sakti*, the power of self-consciousness, entails *ananda*, enjoyment and wonderment on the part of Siva ; bliss gives rise to *iccha*, desire to create ; desire to create cannot be fulfilled unless there is *jnana*, knowledge of what is to be created and how ; this knowledge is followed by the actual creation or manifestation, the power of which is *Kriya-sakti*.

With these five principal aspects of His Sakti, of which there are in reality an infinite number of modes, Paramasiva manifests Himself—or which is the same thing He manifests His Sakti—as the Universe. And He does this of his own free and independent will without the use of any other material save His own Power, and in Himself as the basis of the Universe. And since there is nothing apart from, independent of, Siva, the elements of the universe can be nothing but Siva Himself.

Thus in reality the universe is only an 'expansion' of the Power of Paramasiva in His aspect of Sakti. By this aspect He both becomes and pervades the universe thus produced while yet He remains the ever transcendent Caitanya without in any way being affected by this manifestation.

This manifestation is actually a phase of the eternal cycle of manifestation and dissolution on the part of Sakti. When She 'expands' or opens herself out (*unmesa*) the universe comes to be (*Sristi*) and when she 'gathers' or closes herself up (*nimisa*), the universe disappears as a manifestation (*Pralaya*). There have been countless universes before and there will be equally countless number of them in the endless futurity of time, each successive universe being determined in its character by its predecessor by a kind of causal necessity.

But why does the Absolute manifest Itself at all, why this never-ending process of *Sristi* and *Pralaya* ? Abhinavagupta answers this question in a lucid way. We cannot, he says, ask why a thing does something which is involved in its very constitution. It is, for instance, absurd to ask *why* fire burns and *why* water quenches thirst. The only possible answer is that it is the very *nature* of fire to burn and of water to satisfy thirst. It is the very nature of consciousness to assume many forms and Siva's self-imposition of limitation upon Himself and also His breaking the fetters and returning to His native glory may both be called as His *Krida* or play.<sup>1</sup>



## ANUTVA OR ATOMICITY

The account of the process of manifestation of the universe, as given by the Trika, is very elaborate and complicated. *Unmesa* or opening out is in one sense a limitation of Siva Who, to all appearances, disappears. In fact the universe which is the collective name of the system of limited subjects and objects, cannot come into manifestation unless Siva assumes limitation. This power of obscuration or self-limitation is called *tirodhana*, and the actual limitation takes the form of *anutva* or atomicity. It is also known as *sankoca* or contraction.

Because of this contraction there is effected a dichotomy in Siva, Who is consciousness-power. In this dichotomy the two attributes namely consciousness (*Bodha*) and power or independence (*Svatantrya*) get separated from one another. Though neither of them is completely devoid or empty of the other, we can for all practical purposes say that the aspect of consciousness loses the integral self-consciousness. And thus Siva does not see the universe to be identical with Himself. In other words, since the universe is originally Sakti, consciousness becomes static and sterile and power becomes blind of the awareness of consciousness. Atomicity therefore is the condition of powerless awareness and senseless power.

## EVOLUTION OF MATERIAL UNIVERSE

So far we have been dealing with the evolutionary stages in the manifestation of the cosmic experiences of transcendental unlimited beings or divinities, which stages necessarily lead to similar experiences on the part of limited beings. This brings the exponents of the Trika to the standing difficulty of all philosophy, viz., the transition from the unlimited to the limited ; from the perfect and pure because unlimited to the imperfect and impure, because limited. This transition, predicates the Trika, is effected by Sakti acting in her aspect of the Principle of Negation in a limited form, viz., obscuration, a power or force called Maya.

For, after the primary limitation of atomicity, Siva undergoes a secondary limitation with the help of Maya, and then Siva is described as Purusa. Maya has the function of obscuring and thereby limiting the Absolute Experience. Under its influence relations begin to appear, which by their very nature are limited in themselves. The Trika recognises five such relations, namely, *Kāla* or limited duration ; *Niyati* or regulation in space ; *Raga* or attachment to particular things ; *Vidya* or limited knowledge ; and *Kālā* or the power of limited creation. These five categories along with Maya are known as the six *Kancuka*, meaning

sheath or cloak, which 'wrap up' the limited individuals into these relations.

And thus Siva as Purusa is limited in time and space and has limited knowledge, authorship, and interest or enjoyment. Maya also provides location and object to the Purusa by evolving the physical universe. And as the process of opening out or manifestation of Sakti proceeds, the distance between the 'subject' and 'object' *aham* and *idam* which originally in the Paramasiva was nothing beyond a polarity of the two, increases till they are sundered apart.

Simultaneously with the manifestation of Purusa, the 'Prakriti' is also evolved. The Purusa is only a limited form of the Absolute. It cannot exist without relations. And relations necessarily involve some other term to give meaning to them. The coming into existence of 'Prakriti' is thus inevitable. Thus Trika does not give an independent reality to 'Prakriti' as the Samkhya does, for according to it, 'Prakriti' represents a stage in the evolution of the universe out of Paramasiva.

Once 'Prakriti' is manifested, other categories soon make their appearance. The first are the three principles of mental operation—Buddhi, Ahamkara and Manas. Buddhi is the impersonal state of conscious, or rather it is that state which holds on to general ideas as distinct from ideas of particular facts. Ahamkara is that which gathers and stores up the memories of personal experiences. It identifies and assimilates the experiences of the present ; and it thus constitutes our personal Ego. Manas is that which seeks and singles out particular sensations from among a whole group of them. It builds up particular images and co-ordinates them.

Perception, however, is also bound up with our receptors or sense organs on the one hand and the actual stimuli of nature on the other. Moreover, as a result of perceptions we are normally led to actions and response as well. These considerations explain the 'Tattva's' which emerge next. There are the five senses—the Jnanendriyas—and the five powers of movement or action—the Karmendriyas. There are also the subtle entities which make possible the actual perception of things. These subtle, invisible realities are 'sound-as-such' as distinguished from particular sounds ; 'colour-as-such' as distinct from specific colours like blue or green ; and so on with reference to every sensation. These 'essences' of sensation are called 'Tanmatra's, and there are naturally five of them—Shabda, Sparsha, Rupa, Rasa and Gandha Tanmatra—corresponding to the auditory, the tactual, the visual, the palatic and the olfactory sensations.

When this stage is reached the Purusa is almost ready for its

practical existence and the last step is materialisation, that is the emergence of actual material elements. These are the five 'Bhuta's traditionally recognised by all ancient thinkers—fire, earth, water, air and sky.

#### BONDAGE AND LIBERATION

And so we come to a close of the metaphysical part of Trika philosophy. No philosophical system can rest content merely with the formulation of a chain of realities. There are other problems—about the nature and origin of human knowledge, of the relation of cause and effect and above all the basic question of the bondage of the human soul and the ways and means of its liberation.

Siva as Sakti manifests Himself as a correlated order of knowers knowables, and means of knowledge. This three-fold self-division of Siva presupposes a limitation imposed by Siva upon Himself. The self-limited Siva is designated the *Pasu* or the 'animal', Jiva, Samsarin, etc. The signs of the *Pasu* are false identification of the self with the not-self ascribing not-self to the self, having limited authorship, knowledge, interest, pervasion and duration, and being subject to causality.

The atomic or basic limitation or impurity of the bound self, (*anavamala*) is reinforced by two other impurities, viz, *mayiyamala* and *karmamala*. The former represents the whole series of categories, beginning from the covers or *Kancuka*, that create the physical organism on the subjective side, and evolve the physical world down to the earth on the objective side. The latter (*karmamala*) is responsible for continuing the fetters of embodiment. It is due to this impurity that the Puruṣa becomes subject to good or bad acts, and becomes entangled in repeated births and deaths.

To realize the unfettered condition, to recognise oneself as that which has become or even is, everything, to have unlimited power to know, enjoy and manifest self-bliss, to be infinite and eternal, to be completely free from and independent of *Niyati*, that is, regulation or causality,—this is the destiny of the *Pasu*. To be, or rather to recognise oneself as Siva is his goal.

Obviously, the limited individual is subject to ignorance (*ajnana*), which according to the Trika is two-fold, viz., *paurusa* and *baudha*. *Paurusa ajnana* is the innate ignorance in the very soul of man. It is the primal limitation, the original impurity or *anavamala*, a consequence of the limitation taken willingly and playfully by Siva upon Himself, and is not, therefore, removable by the bound soul's own efforts. Siva alone can liquidate it through His dispensation of grace (*anugraha*), called technically *Saktipata* or the descent of Siva's force to break this



limitation. Divine grace leads to the destruction of all fetters (*pasa-kshya*) and the restoration of the divinity in man (*Sivatva-yojana*). How and when this force will descend cannot be indicated because His nature is freedom and spontaneity.

But in spite of this spiritual gain coming to the soul, the Jiva or the bound individual may not know it, for he has to know things through the instrument of his *buddhi*, his intelligence which is gross and impure. So, actually speaking, the Jiva has to adopt other means to know and enjoy his newly won spiritual gain.

The most important of these is *diksa* or initiation. The Trika says that as a result of *Saktipat* one is brought to a real *guru*. *Diksa* awakens the *Kriyasakti* in the limited soul which ultimately means the soul's ability to absorb and integrate the 'it' or the objective seemingly separate from itself, within its own soul. This is the dawning of the *paurusajnana*, the true knowledge about the real and ultimate nature of the Purusa.

To be able to enjoy in life this inherent, reawakened Sivahood, to attain Jivanmukti or liberation from the bonds of ignorance even while the soul is associated with the body, it is necessary that *bauddha-jnana*, or knowledge of this internal liberated condition through *buddhi*, be attained also. This can be achieved by the purification of *buddhi*, the means of which are the study and deeper understanding of *Sastras*. It does not mean merely scholarship or repetition of logical formulae. It demands a deeper discipline and it is this latter that provides a basis for the practical injunctions of the Saiva religion.

#### PATHS TO LIBERATION

The religious literature of Kashmir Saivism is very vast and much of it falls outside the scope of our present review. The border-line between religion and philosophy, however, has never been very sharp in India. And the masters of the Trika philosophy have also laid down the means of liberation of human soul from bondage. It is remarkable that these are open to all human beings without any distinction of sex, creed, caste or colour. Trika also forbids suppression of any thought in opposition to Saivism.

Traditionally, four different means or 'Upayas' are recognised. The first is immediate through special grace. In this path to liberation no active process on the part of the individual is involved. Sakti Herself is said to be the direct means, working through the teacher. This is known as 'Anupaya' or 'Anandopaya.'

The second method is through destruction of the 'Vikalpas'

leading to definite knowledge. In this method the strong urge and 'will-to-know' of the individual is emphasized and it is, therefore, known as the 'Ichchopaya'.

In the third category falls the so called 'Saktopaya', in which Intuition is given a dominant place. This method involves Yogic perfection and owes much to the influence of Samkhya and Yoga philosophies.

The fourth and the last means to liberation is the sum-total of all religious observances including meditation, repetition of the sacred name and other external practices.

Through these means or 'Upayas' the limited individual, inspite of his being deficient in power (*sakti-daridra*), attains to the glorious knowledge of his own true self. In other words he is liberated from Maya and 'unwrapped' of her five *Kancukas* or sheaths.

#### HARMONY THE WATCHWORD OF TRIKA

The Trika, however, does not stop with the deliverance of the soul from Maya, from the delusion of duality : it goes further to the concept of divinization of the soul, which means the recognition of its own identity with Paramasiva. And this recognition is the same as realising identity with everything and also freedom from everything. When this state is achieved, the individual feels that he is "nothing in particular and yet all things together." Thus, in a sense, harmony is the watchword of the practical spiritual discipline of the Trika.

It will thus be seen that the Trika philosophy promises to satisfy all sides of human nature, of knowledge, love, and will. Siva being unitary consciousness as such, the realization of Siva gives knowledge of everything by identity with everything ; and Siva being at constant play with His own Sakti, there is ample scope for *bhakti*, devotion or love ; also to recognise oneself as Paramasiva means mastery and lordship of *sakti* and thus implies sovereign and unrestricted will. Further the theistic element is brought out by the rejection of the Yoga view that release is attained by the unaided effort of the spiritual aspirant, and by the admission that the final step of liberation is provided by *anugraha* or the grace of Siva Himself.

#### RELATION WITH SOUTH INDIAN SAIVISM

This in brief is the doctrine and philosophy of Kashmir Saivism which reached its apogee in the twelfth century A.D. We have already noted some of the fundamental differences between this school of Saiva philosophy and that of South Indian Saivism. That both have also

close affinities is quite apparent from the fact that Kashmir Saivism and Saiva Sidhanta build up their doctrine from the basic conception of Advaita or monism. The history of the origin and development of Saivism in India is an interesting study. It clearly reveals the cultural unity of India from extreme north to extreme south from time immemorial. How the current of art and philosophy passed from the north to the south and *vice versa* is shown by the free exchange of books, and visits of saints and savants to Kashmir and from there to South India.

It was, for instance, as a result of the direct impact of Sankaracarya that the Kashmir Saivists transformed the older form of dualistic Saivism as prevailing in Kashmir before the revelation of *Siva-Sutras*, to that of the basic conception of the Vedanta. But South Indian Saivism itself traces its origin to Kashmir. It is known that Thirumular, one of the earliest teachers of Saivism in the South—he is placed some time between the first and the ninth centuries A.D.—came from the land of the Pratyabijna school, that is Kashmir. It is also known that the Cholas of the tenth and eleventh centuries A.D. imported many Saiva teachers from the north to come and teach Saivism to their people. Recently several important manuscripts of works of famous Kashmirian Saiva philosophers in Sarada and some South Indian scripts have been found in Kerala and Madras.

“How much older Kashmir Saivism may have been in its origin,” observes Dr. Nilakantha Sastri, “is not easy to determine. There are elements in common between the dogmatics of Kashmir Saivism and those of South Indian Saivism. Yet, in their philosophy, they differ perceptibly, the Kashmir school being idealistic and the South Indian pluralist in metaphysics. The historical relation between the two forms is not easy to decide, though the mention of Brahmans from Kashmir in South Indian inscriptions may lead one to infer that South Indian Saivism is also ultimately derived from Kashmir. Literary and epigraphic evidence from South India and Java and other Indian colonies of the East also connects the origin and spread of Saivism with the march of Agastya from the North to the South, and his further progress towards the Eastern lands.”<sup>1</sup>

Another illustration of the cultural unity of India from ancient times is furnished by the fact that in order to combat Saivism at its fountain head, Ramanuja (11th century A.D.), the leader of the rival Vaishnava creed, travelled all the way from Madras to Kashmir, which continued to be the premier centre of Saivism, and to influence the

1 *The Cultural Heritage of India*, Vol. IV, pp. 77-78.



religious and philosophic thought of India.

### DIFFUSION OF SANSKRIT LEARNING

We have so far surveyed briefly the contribution of Kashmirian poets, dramatists, writers and philosophers to Sanskrit language and literature. This naturally presupposes an extensive study by them of the works on various subjects written by authors from the rest of India. The huge mass of Sanskrit manuscripts in the Devanagari and Sarada scripts found all over the State in recent years, shows the extent of the scope and variety of Sanskrit texts and studies and their diffusion among the people. George Buhler who toured the State in search of Sanskrit manuscripts in 1875, found an incredibly large number of works on Vedas, Puranas, Mahatmyas, Poetry, Plays and Fables, Poetics, Metrics, Grammar, Kosas, Law and Polity, Samkhya, Vedanta and Saiva Philosophy, Nyaya, Purva Mimamsa, Astronomy, Astrology, Vaidya-Sastra, etc. The discovery of manuscripts on such varied subjects left him amazed. "I must premise," he records, "that I do not pretend to give all that is valuable in them. I have had no time to read several millions of *slokas* and to compare them with the verses known from Indian books. A thorough study of such a collection would take up the whole time of a student during several years, and I even doubt if any man can sufficiently become master of all the various *Sastras* represented, in order to estimate the books at their proper value."

Another feature of Sanskrit learning in Kashmir was the special and exclusive recensions of some famous and important classics, like the Mahabharata and Kalidasa's *Sakuntala*. Buhler's discovery, for instance, of the Kashmirian recension of the latter was a significant moment in the history of the controversy as to the original and authentic form of the text of the play. From a comparison of this text, readings of which went back to the end of the 12th or to the beginning of the 13th century, with the then printed editions, it appeared that the Kashmirian version agreed neither with the Bengali redaction nor with the Devanagari. Pischel, however, gave his final verdict on the controversy in his posthumously published second edition of the play in the Harvard Oriental Series, in which he assesses the value of the Kashmir recension.

In the case of Mahabharata, the matter passed through a similar controversy. The Kashmirian recension discovered by Buhler was exhaustively made use of by the late Dr. Sukthankar who revealed the importance of that recension to Indologists in the February, 1921, issue of the "Vividhajnanavistara" (Bombay), where the extent of the Adi Parva is quoted to bring home the conclusion that much reliance

cannot be placed upon the current text of the Parva Sangraha figures of *Adhyayas* and *Slokas*.

Similarly with regard to the *Bhagvadgita* many Kashmiri pandits like Kesava, Vasugupta, Anandavardhana, Ramakantha, Bhaskara, Abhinavagupta and a number of others, wrote commentaries on it. The earliest of the known Kashmiri commentaries on this sacred book of the Hindus, is that of Vasugupta, the founder of Kashmir Saivism. This commentary called *Vasvi-tika* is not extant. Only the first six chapters are perhaps still to be found incorporated in another *Tika* on the *Bhagvadgita*, called *Lasaki* by Rajanka Lasakaka, of which manuscripts are available.

The second of the known commentaries is by Anandavardhana. Next comes Ramakantha's commentary called the *Sarvatobadra*, which is a very extensive work. Besides these. Bhaskara is referred to by Abhinavagupta as having commented upon the Gita. Abhinavagupta himself is the author of still another commentary which has been before modern scholars since 1912.

It was in 1930 that Dr. Schrader published a paper on the Kashmirian recension of the Gita which evoked considerable interest among scholars. Almost all Kashmiri writers prior to the 12th century A.D. refer to a text of the Gita which differs in its text from the vulgate adopted by Sankaracarya and later non-Kashmiri writers. The most important of such variations are the addition of certain verses and omission of a few others. This has given rise to a controversy which in the words of Kunhan Raja, "has assumed in the region of Indological studies an importance too big in dimension to be ignored by any serious student. The problem has come to stay."

Not only did the Kashmiri scholars comment upon classical works like those of Kalidasa, but they also studied, and wrote commentaries on, important works produced in Sanskrit. For instance the *Yudhisthiravijaya*, the premier 'kavya' of Vasudev Bhattatiri of distant Kerala was commented upon by Ramakantha of Kashmir.

No wonder the learned Pandits of Kashmir and their works were in demand at the courts of several enlightened princes in India, at important assemblies of thinkers and writers and at the Sanskrit Universities in the rest of India. And it was the ambition of every student and lover of Sanskrit language and literature and Indian philosophy to go to Kashmir to drink deep at the fountain of knowledge and wisdom that gushed forth from the "Land of Sarada, the Goddess of Learning."

## DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC

The cultivation of fine arts by the people of Kashmir has an ancient background. Some terra-cotta tiles of the fourth century A.D. excavated at Harwan depict a danseuse in a dance pose and other tiles show a female musician playing a *dholak*. We find several references to dance, drama and music in the pages of the *Rajatarangini*. It was, however, in the seventh and eighth centuries A.D. that these arts attained their full vigour. In fact no student of classical Indian Dance can ignore or by-pass the commentaries on Bharata's *Natya-Sastra*, and original works on Dance, like those of Udbhatta, Lollapata, Sankuka, Bhatta Nayaka, and the last but greatest of them all, Abhinavagupta. The Tandava of Siva is described in *Harvijayakavya* by Rajanaka Ratnakara.

The finer traditions in music and dance have, however, been preserved in India by the hereditary professional artistes who passed them down from generation to generation. But unfortunately, the history of Kashmir after the 11th century A.D. is written in civil wars, invasions, repressions and bloodshed, intermittently filled in with sad accounts of famines, fires and epidemics. No wonder the traditions in music and dance vanished and what has been left is only a poor specimen of their former glory.

As elsewhere in India, classical dancing in Kashmir also had a religious background, the temple dancers having played a significant role in its development. The first reference to dancing in the *Rajatarangini* is about king Jalauka, the son and successor of the emperor Ashoka, who is credited with being an ardent worshipper of Siva and a lover of music and dance. While worshipping at the shrine of Siva, "a hundred among the ladies of the seraglio who had risen to dance, in honour of the god, at the time fixed for dancing and singing, he gave out of joy to Jyestharudra."<sup>1</sup> Another king, Pratapaditya II, who had fallen in love with the wife of a rich merchant, but whom he could not marry in the lifetime of her husband, was induced by the latter "to accept her from a temple as a dancing girl put there by her husband on account of her skill in dancing."<sup>2</sup>

It appears from another passage in the Chronicles that dancing in temples was a hereditary calling with certain families. While out in the jungle, Lalitaditya is recorded to have noticed two beautiful damsels dancing gracefully to the accompaniment of a drum and other musical instruments. On being questioned as to the purpose of their

1 *Raj.*, i-151.

2 *ibid.*, iv-36.



dancing in the jungle, they declared : "We come from a family of professional dancers and we live in the village yonder. By the direction of our mothers who got their living here, we perform at this spot the dancing, which our descent makes incumbent. This custom handed down by tradition, has become fixed in our family."<sup>1</sup> Lalitaditya had the site excavated and, to his amazement, found a large temple containing two beautiful images of Siva and Vishnu, which he installed in two temples in his new city of Parihaspura.

That this profession was not looked down upon is apparent from another passage wherein it is mentioned that king Cakravarman married two professional dancing girls, sisters Hamsi and Nagalata and although they belonged to a lower caste, he made Hamsi his first queen who "enjoyed among the king's wives the privilege of being fanned with the Chowries".<sup>2</sup> Similarly Utkarsa (1089 A. D.) married Sahaja a dancing girl belonging to a temple, whom "he had seen on the dancing-stage".<sup>3</sup> Another king Uccala, married a dancing girl named Jayamati who became later his chief queen.<sup>4</sup> King Harsa personally taught dancing girls how to act and dance.<sup>5</sup>

A study of the sculptures and reliefs on the walls and columns of old temples reveals figures of dancers with ornaments and graceful styles of hair-dressing. It appears that classical Indian dancing as systematised by Bharata was in vogue in Kashmir, and was assiduously studied and practised by the artists. Jayapida, for instance, is known to have been "acquainted with this Sastra" and could therefore relish the dance performance of a "Gauda (Bengal) artiste, named Kamla, who performed in the temple of Kartikeya."<sup>6</sup>

It was, however in the eleventh century A. D. that king Kalasa introduced ballet dancing and choral music which became popular.<sup>7</sup> But classical dancing continued to hold its ground even after the Hindu rule came to an end in the 14th century A. D. We have, for instance, a graphic description of classical dance performance at the court of king Zain-ul-abidin, from the pen of Srivara. There is a reference to the Tandava dance of Siva in several verses of the *Rajatarangini*,<sup>8</sup> The Tandava represents the five activities (*Pancaurya*) viz., creation, preservation, incarnation, destruction and deliverance, and well represented the mood and attitude of kings and people of Kashmir in the days of the later Hindu rulers. Dance performances were invariably accom-

1 *Raj.*, iv-269-70.

2 *Ibid.*, v-361-85.

3 *Ibid.*, vii-858.

4 *Ibid.*, vii-1460-62.

5 *Ibid.*, vii-1440-41.

6 *Ibid.*, iv-422-23.

7 *Ibid.*, vii-606.

8 *Ibid.*, viii-2931.

panied by music played on lutes, flutes, Hudduka or bag-pipe, and drums.

It appears that dance and dramatic performances were generally given in temples for both the common people and the nobility. The kings had their own troupe of performers and a permanent theatre (*natyamandapa*) was a feature of palace and temple architecture.<sup>1</sup> We also learn that there were theatres with leather-cushioned seats.

Side by side with the classical music and dance, there seems to have existed also folk dancing and music, performances of which were held in the open. From a passage in the *Rajatarangini* we learn that these were at the mercy of the weather and the audience would disperse pellmell when caught in a rain-storm.<sup>2</sup>

Drama also seems to have flourished in ancient Kashmir, along with dance. As already noted, Kashmirian authors wrote a number of dramas, which it seems were staged by professional artistes. References to theatrical performances, the stage and strolling players are common in the *Rajatarangini*.<sup>3</sup> The stage was at an elevated position, lighted up with multi-coloured lamps. The players would dress appropriately and used yellow orpiment and other emollients and colours for their make-up.<sup>4</sup> The comic parts were played with great effect, and generally depicted the life of a rapacious Kayastha or a newly-rich Damara. Apart from earnings by their performances, the strolling players received customary gifts from the king and nobles on festivals and fairs.

Music was cultivated as a fine art by both the king and the commoner. The *Rajatarangini* supplies several clues to the development of music in ancient Kashmir. We are, for instance, told that music was played in Buddhist *viharas* in the time of Jalauka, son of Ashoka.<sup>5</sup> The king was himself a lover of music and maintained a troupe of dancing girls and musicians. At the Hindu sacred shrines and in temples, music was played to the accompaniment of big drums, cymbals, etc. At several religious ceremonies, particularly connected with Tantric worship, music was a must. Mamma a blind musician was, for instance, specially employed by the superintendent of a *matha* to play at the time of Tantric worship.<sup>6</sup>

The kings, however, were the patrons of music and invariably listened to songs and the music of the lute and the flute at bed-time.<sup>7</sup>

1 *Raj.*, vii-707.

2 *Ibid.*, vii-1606.

3 *Ibid.*, vii-285 ; viii-1950, 1970, 2178.

4 *Ibid.*, viii-2825.

5 *Raj.*, i-140.

6 *Ibid.*, vii-299.

7 *Ibid.*, ii-126 : viii-2398-99.

Some of them were great adepts in this art. King Kalasa created a taste among the Kashmiris for light operatic songs (*upanga-gita*).<sup>1</sup> His son, "Harsa, amusing his father in public with songs as if he were a singer, kept up his establishment with the presents the former gave him".<sup>2</sup> He also gave music lessons to several courtiers, among whom was Kanaka, the uncle of our historian Kalhana. He was a great connoisseur of music and "to one named Bhimanayaka, who could play charming music, he gave when pleased with his performance on a drum, an elephant together with a female elephant."<sup>3</sup>

We are, however, given a sordid picture of the life of professional musicians of the time—particularly those who supplied instrumental music to the singer or the dancer. They are depicted as addicted to keeping late hours, eating much meat and drinking incessantly."<sup>4</sup> Perhaps it was a later development, result no doubt of the general laxity in morals among kings and courtiers.

From a critical study of the *Rajatarangini* we find that the premier musical instruments were the lute, flute and the drum.<sup>5</sup> Classical music was played on these. Besides, there is a mention of Hudukka which may be compared to a bag-pipe.<sup>6</sup> In the temples music was accompanied by the big drum, conch and cymbals.<sup>7</sup>

Side by side with classical music, a kind of folk music also existed in ancient Kashmir. *Chhakri* which is so popular these days, can be traced to the time of Kalhana (12th century A. D.) and even earlier. We are told that Bhiksacara who occupied the throne for a few months indulged in "playing music on earthen pots, brass vessels and other such instruments".<sup>8</sup> There would be dancing and singing with pantomimic movements of the head, hands and feet.

## PAINTING

With exquisite natural scenery all around them, Kashmiris as may well be excepted, developed an artistic eye as also a mode of expression of their aesthetic qualities, which distinguished their art and architecture. The distinct school of architecture which is depicted in the large number of ruins of old stone temples dotting the Valley, has received due recognition from art critics and connoisseurs. But the allied art of painting practised through the centuries, has escaped attention. Several factors are responsible for it. In the first place a large number of old and beautiful paintings and book illustrations were

1 *Raj.*, vii-606

2 *Ibid.*, vii-613-14.

3 *Ibid.*, vii-1116-17.

4 *Ibid.*, vii-285.

5 *Ibid.*, ii-126 : vii 285, 1601: viii-2398-99.

6 *Ibid.*, viii-1173.

7 *Ibid.*, viii-901-2.

8 *Ibid.*, viii-98, 891.



taken away by European collectors towards the end of the last and the beginning of the present century, and whatever little remained was in the possession of people most of whom were ignorant of their value as treasures of art,

Besides, the non-existence of mural paintings either in the old stone temples or the medieval mosques, has left a gap in the history of painting in Kashmir, for, frescoes have long been associated with the development of Indian art. The ancient architect seems to have laid greater emphasis on sculpture than on painting to decorate his creation, obviously because he worked in stone and believed in its longer life and permanency.

But Kashmiris had a deep love for painting. In his inimitable work, *Kuttanimata-kavya*, Damodargupta mentions that painting was one of the subjects which ladies of Kashmir had to learn and cultivate in their youth. It is evident from the several customs and ceremonies which are observed from time immemorial, that painting in Kashmir has ancient traditions. For example, on Gauri-tritya (3rd of the bright fortnight of Magha) every boy and girl in a Kashmiri Pandit family receives from the priest bright-coloured paintings of gods and goddesses as well as of flowers and animals. On Asarh-saftami (7th of the bright fortnight of Asarh) every Hindu house is decorated with mural drawings and paintings of the rising sun. During marriage and Yagnupavita ceremonies, the doors and windows are painted bright with floral designs and drawings.

Circumstantial information regarding a distinct school of painting previous to Mughal times is supplied by Taranath, a Tibetan Lama, who wrote a history of Buddhism in A. D. 1608. After a rather vague and legendary account of ancient artists and their works, he gives some precise details :

"Later, in the days of Buddha-paksa (the identity of this monarch is uncertain) the sculpture and painting of the artist Bimbasara were especially wonderful, and resembled the works of early gods. The number of his followers was exceedingly great, and, as he was born in Magadha, the artists of this school were called Madyadesa artists. In the time of king Sila (probably the celebrated Harsavardhana Siladitya, 606-647 A.D.), there lived an especially skilful delineator of the gods born in Marwar, named Sringadhara; he left behind him paintings and other masterpieces like those produced by Yaksas. Those who followed his lead were called the old Western School."

After giving an account of the extension of the influence of the Western School to Bengal, Bihar, Orissa and Nepal, Taranath proceeds

to give some information regarding the Kashmir School :

“In Kashmir, too, there were in former times followers of the old Western School of Madhyadesa ; later on a certain Hasuraya founded a new school of painting and sculpture, which is called the Kashmir School.”<sup>1</sup>

Being the home of Mahayana Buddhism, Kashmiri painters and sculptors carried their art traditions even further north, to Central Asia and China. The aim of the Buddhist artist was to visualise the ideals of his creed : to illustrate by pictorial parables all the beautiful sentiments of his religion. These were designed to appeal to the higher feelings of the spectator. What the political vicissitudes and the natural calamities obliterated in Kashmir, remained preserved in the caves and cities buried under the sands of Central Asia. “Kashmir murals,” writes Dr. Goetz, “we know only from places outside the Valley : the earlier style in the part of the ‘Gandharan’ murals in Ming-Oi (Kucha) in the northern Tarim Basin, the later, in the frescoes of Man-nan and of the ‘Red Temple’ at Tsaparang in Western Tibet ; and illustrated manuscripts have turned up in Tibet. The style of the ‘School of Hasuraya’ has more vitality than the Bengal miniatures but a harder line, and brighter, but rather cold colours.”<sup>2</sup>

It seems that the early artists used a specially processed ground on cloth to paint on. We have, for instance, a remarkable set of twentyfour large paintings on cotton, preserved in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, which though painted in the middle of the 16th century, yet shows the material that the early painters had at their disposal. The colours were all vegetable and mineral, which lasted longer and also produced a better effect. Kashmiris appear to have been adepts at painting designs on dress material also, which looked so real that when king Harsa’s palace was looted after his defeat at the hands of rebel forces, “some low-caste people eager to get gold, burned clothes which were painted with gold, and then anxiously searched the ashes.”<sup>3</sup>

### SCULPTURE

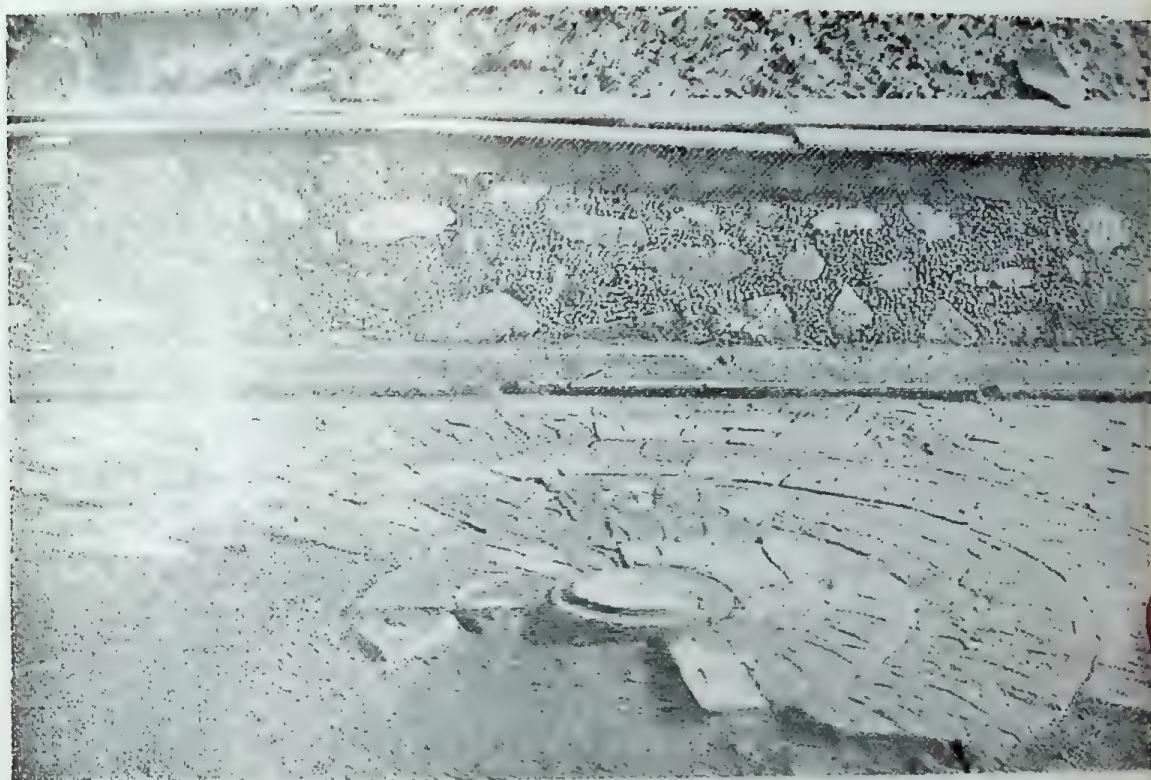
Kashmir has, however, still preserved some good specimens of sculpture and it is not difficult to reconstruct a succinct history of the development of plastic art. Very little has, however, survived of the

1 Taranath, *History of Buddhism*, trans, by W. T. Heeley, in *Indian Antiquary*, vol. iv, p. 101.

2 *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, p. 143.

3 *Raj.*, vii-1575





Tiled floor excavated at Harwan

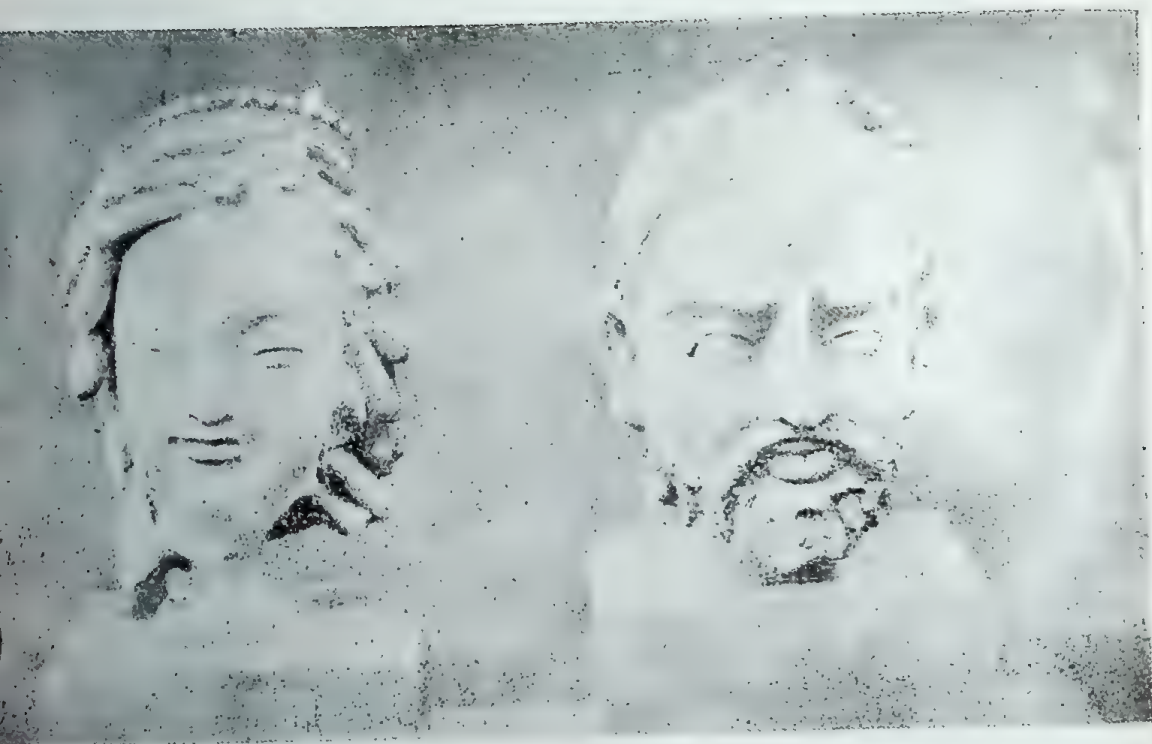


Pompeian figures, Harwan



A Pompeian figure, Harwan





Terra-cotta heads from Ushkur (Huskapura)



Kashmiri art of the centuries before the Christian era. At Harwan Buddhist ruins have been excavated, but they are not of earlier than the 4th century A.D. We have, to some extent, dealt with the birth and diffusion of Gandharan art in Chapter Four and need not go over it again.

The moulded brick tiles unearthed at Harwan depict a unique art trend, in that they do not deal with religious, but with secular themes. We find life and nature as the artist found around him. There are figures of men wearing Central Asian costumes ; and curiously enough the relief figures of Parthian horsemen, women, heads and busts appear side by side with early Gupta motifs.<sup>1</sup>

The mouldings on Harwan terra-cotta tiles cannot, however, be the work of folk-artists. The art seems to have attained a high degree of sophistication and the moulded tiles depict life of the upper class, inasmuch as we find figures of hunting horsemen, men and women sitting on a balcony and enjoying perhaps the beautiful landscape and listening to music from female musicians and recitals of dancers. The physiognomy of the persons depicted on these tiles leaves no doubt of their Central Asian origin—their prominent cheek bones, small eyes, receding forehead and heavy features, all point to the same conclusion. From some letters in the Kharosthi script which went into disuse before the 4th century A.D., and also from a small passage on Buddhist creed written in the Brahmi characters, it seems the tiles belong to the 3rd—4th century A.D.

Whereas the Harwan tiles are flat, hardly rising out of the background, and are made from a mould and therefore repetitive, the terracotta heads and reliefs found at Ushkur are each a single masterpiece produced from moulds carved by hand.

These "later Gandhara" terra-cottas have been variously put from the 4th to the 8th centuries A.D. The figurines depict true Hellenistic influence. Hellenistic art was the dominant cultural force for about a thousand years from the 3rd century B.C. to 700 A.D. in what is now called Afghanistan, and its final echoes lasted in Kashmir until the 10th century A.D.

Relics similar to Ushkur have recently been unearthed at Akhnur. Situated on the right bank of the Chenab, where the river first enters the plains of the Punjab, Akhnur lay in ancient times on the route between Jammu and Srinagar *via* the Budil Pass, as well as on the road to Rajauri (ancient Rajapuri). It was thus an important centre of trade and commerce and the headquarters of a flourishing timber

1 Goetz, *Op. Cit.*, p. 69.

industry. Both in treatment and the material used in the lovely terra-cotta heads with their sombre lines and the serene and peaceful poses, we notice a close affinity to the "Later Gandhara School" on the one hand and to the Gupta art on the other. The fragments collected both at Ushkur and Akhnur consist of pieces of bodies, covered with drapery or partly covered, or even nude ; broken bodies of princes, princesses, attendants, holy men, Buddhist mendicants in their draped robes ; elaborate decorations that once might have been personal ornaments, such as crowns, necklaces, armlets, bracelets, ear-rings and the like ; architectural fragments of a highly ornamental style, including pillar capitals with vine ornaments, volutes, etc.

Stylistically they seem to inherit two different aesthetics : the mongrel Indo-Roman school of Gandhara as testified by the treatment of the hair, head-dresses and jewellery, as well as the diminutive sizes, while a prominent nose and the heavy fleshy cheeks with almond-eyes seem to indicate the influence of Kushan and Gupta-Mathura art.

It is not difficult to trace the origin of the terra-cotta figurine art. With the decline of the Gandhara school, when there was a shift of artistic activity to areas where schist was not available, (Kashmir, Taxila, Kabul, Bamiyan, Central Asia) a school of sculpture took to working in stucco. Here, gradually, they developed a sensitive, somewhat romantic, style : but later they found that burnt clay (terra-cotta) lasted longer and was not destroyed like stucco by rain and sun. Patronage of these artists fell low in Taxila and adjoining areas, when Buddhism was dying out, and they crossed the Pir Panjal range into Kashmir where, from towards the end of the 5th century A.D., the building trade was very brisk and flourishing.

And this too had an historical background. While the Turks, successors of the White Huns, were pressed hard by the Chinese and the Muslim Arabs in Central Asia and Afghanistan during the seventh and eighth centuries, Kashmir became under the Karkota dynasty the leading power in north-western India. "The empire of Lalitaditya reached from Mysore to Mongolia ; from Bengal and Orissa to Afghanistan. At the end of the eighth century Jayapida perished as a result of a fruitless effort to keep at least northern India."<sup>1</sup> Later, under the Utpala dynasty (855-939 A.D.), Kashmir had a period of peace and consolidation, but thereafter, weakened by internal strife, it became an unimportant kingdom in the Himalayan region of India.

The figure sculpture during the Karkota rule was thus affected by two waves of art—from Central Asia and from Mathura. As the

1 Goetz, *Op-Cit.*, p. 141.





A 10 feet high rock sculpture at Noulbe  
on the road to Teo



Elaborate sculpture at Martand





*stupa* of Cankuna (Lalitaditya's minister of Chinese descent) at Parihaspura shows, there are T'ang Chinese models found in the Bodhisatva statues there. But then the king's Indian expeditions resulted in a considerable influx of sculptors trained in the late Gupta tradition. There must have been a surplus of sculptors in Central India then because in those years Indian prosperity was dwindling. Whether they came voluntarily or were forced to come by Lalitaditya, we cannot ascertain. But in any case we find at Martand reliefs in the best late Gupta style around the plinth of the great central shrine, and likewise on those of the subsidiary temples flanking it on both sides. "They are very elegant, mannered, somewhat sensuous, fashionable, often even sophisticated. Their costume, on the other hand, generally goes back to Gandhara and Sassanian fashions, which then must still have prevailed in Kashmir."<sup>1</sup>

But most of the sculptures found on the walls, on the entrance to the temple and on staircases, depicting the Sun-god, goddesses, or king Lalitaditya with his queens and priests, are the work of local artists, trained no doubt by the late Gupta masters. Their modelling is no doubt less sensitive, and more static, but instead they have a vitality and strength which for the next two hundred years was the hall-mark of Kashmir sculpture. "Also iconographically they are interesting ; for they have preserved quite a number of types which otherwise are rare in India but which are well known to us from Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia and Champa as imports from India—e.g., many 'Tantric' types, or Vishnu riding on Garuda, etc."<sup>2</sup>

Sculptural art of distinct Kashmirian characteristics—a real synthesis of the influences from Gandhara and Gupta schools plus the elegance in details and symmetrical proportions in body and look stamped by the Kashmirian artists—reached its apogee under the rule of the Utpala dynasty. The four-headed Vishnu, heavily ornamented and clad in *dhoti* with a dagger attached to the jewelled girdle at the waist, is the most popular figure of the period. The powerful frame of the body exhibits vigour and discipline and the emotional expression of the face is in sharp contrast to the passionless, calm features of the Buddha and Bodhisatvas of the earlier sculptures found at Pandrenthan and Parihaspura. Other sculptures too, for example Kamadeva seated between his consorts, Rati and Priti, Krishna amid his Gopis, Ganga, Yamuna, Trimurti, Ardhanareswara, Ganesa and Lakshmi, icons so much varied, reveal the same innate emotion, depth of feeling and above all vigour.

1 Goetz, *Art and Letters*, vol, xxvii., p. 7.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 7.



After the Utpalas the history of plastic art in Kashmir is written in decay. With the continued internecine warfare in the Valley, and the fall in the material and moral standards of the king and the court (the patrons of art and letters), sculpture and iconography touched a low level. We have, however, echoes of the Kashmirian art in the sculptures in the later temples of Babor and Kirmchi in Jammu. In the Valley building in stone was abandoned in favour of the cheaper material—timber. Wooden temples were built at that time in great numbers, whose blockhouse construction seems to survive in the peculiar type of Kashmiri mosques. "Examples of their richly carved decoration survive only outside Kashmir Valley, at Marol in Lahaul, and in some early Buddhist monasteries in Ladakh, Spiti and Guge. They reveal the same facade design, but elaborated into fragile filigree thronged with delicate figures in chapel niches or on lotus flowers."<sup>1</sup>

### ARCHITECTURE

"Of all the arts," observes Percy Brown, "practised by the people of the Valley in the pre-Islamic period, the building art was one in which they were rotably proficient, as the remains of their large monuments in stone are a standing proof."<sup>2</sup> That the style which culminated in such masterpieces of architecture as Martand and Avantipura, must have had a long history of development, goes without saying. And that it was a product of influences from different classical schools is evident from the trefoil and the horseshoe arches, and from the fluted pillars.

### BUDDHIST STYLE

An attempt has been made to link the beginnings of the architectural trends in Kashmir to the Buddhist *stupas* and *caityas*, foundations of which were recently excavated at Īrwan and Ushkur. This, however, poses an inexplicable problem, as only a century or two later to the date assigned to these ruins (3rd-4th century A.D.) we notice some vastly superior masterpieces coming up, without any evidence of a steady growth. Further, in the face of Kalhana's references to foundations made by kings and queens long before the date of Harwan and Ushkur, such a hypothesis is apparently vague and incomprehensible.

For, we have a definite assertion in the *Rajatarangini* that Ashoka founded the city of Srinagar and also a Buddhist settlement in the Valley at Sukseletra. No traces of Ashoka's city are now left, but we have a glimpse of its grandeur in the account of Heun Tsiang who

1 Goetz, *Five Thousand Years of Indian Art*, p. 143.

2 *Indian Architecture*.

refers to it as the 'old capital'. It is, therefore, not improbable that the stone architecture as depicted in the monuments still extant, had a much earlier tradition than is supposed by these art historians, and had very little relation with, and developed independent of, the influence of, the foundations at Harwan and Ushkur. These latter seem to have been solitary specimens of the Buddhist settlements of a later period, when Gandhara having lost much of its importance as a stronghold of Buddhism, no longer appealed to monks and preachers who migrated in numbers to a more hospitable land in Kashmir.

So Harwan and Ushkur cannot by any stretch of imagination be considered early specimens of Kashmir stone architecture, nor can they explain the origin of building art in Kashmir. Their importance lies in showing the various influences, particularly Greek, Roman and Byzantine, which the architectural developments in Kashmir were subject to.

At Harwan, the excavations have revealed the foundation of a monastic establishment with a *stupa* and a *caitya*, corresponding in every particular to the *stupa* courts at Gandhara. The *stupa* was square in plan with its base in three tiers and approached by a flight of steps on its western side, the whole being contained within an open quadrangle. The *caitya* or temple occupied a more prominent position and had a hall with an apsidal end, "a distinctive form of Buddhist temple common in rock architecture of the more southerly parts of India, but rarely found elsewhere."<sup>1</sup>

More interesting than the plan of the foundations is the manner and method of building adopted. Three methods have been disclosed : the earliest consisting of embedded quantities of pebbles in mud mortar ; "diaper pebble" masonry where the pebble wall is reinforced by the insertion at intervals of irregular stone ; "diaper rubble" resembling in some respects rubble masonry, the walls being composed of large untrimmed stones with the spaces between filled by smaller ones.

#### ARYAN ORDER OF ARCHITECTURE

It is, however, the stone architecture of Kashmir temples dotting the Valley that at once attracts the attention of every tourist and archaeologist. Cunningham who made the first on-the-spot study of these ruins calls their style of architecture the "Aryan Order". This name it fully merits, for it is as much a distinct order of architecture as any one of the more celebrated classic orders.

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1 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture*, p. 190.

The characteristic features of the Kashmirian architecture are its lofty pyramidal roofs, its trefoiled doorways, covered by pyramidal pediments, and the great width of its inter-columnations. That it had been influenced by Greek and Roman styles is evidenced by the close resemblance which the Kashmirian columnade bears to the classical peristyle of Greece. At the same time the echinos, which is the leading feature of the Kashmirian capital, is also the chief member of the Doric capital. It seems that the Kashmiri architects borrowed the style from the Indo-Greeks during the time of their control of the Kabul Valley and Western Punjab.

The superiority of the Kashmirian architecture seems to have been known all over India, for one of the names for the people of Kashmir is *Sastra-Silpina*, "architects," a term which could only have been applied to them on account of their well known skill in building. One wonders how in those ancient days massive stones were lifted and laid in position with great precision on the heights of the temples. But Kashmiris appear to have known the science and laws of mechanics then, as they used *yantras* or machines, in lifting up enormously bulky and heavy stones.<sup>1</sup>

It is beyond the scope of the present work to give a detailed description of all the old temple ruins in Kashmir. But to follow their architectural development, however, it is necessary to note the outstanding features of a few typical ones.

Perhaps the earliest specimens of this order of architecture are the temple on the Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar ; the ruins at Loduv and the Pravaresa temple, now known as Baha-ud-din Sahib, at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill.

#### SANKARACARYA TEMPLE

The most conspicuous monument that attracts the attention of a visitor on reaching Srinagar, is the ancient temple on the crest of the Sankaracarya hill standing 1,000 feet above the plain. This temple rests on a solid rock and consists of an octagonal basement of 13 layers of stone 20 feet high, on which is supported a square building. On each of the four sides are two projections which terminate in pediment and a gable, the latter intersecting the main roof half way up its slope.

The body of the temple is surrounded by a terrace enclosed by a stone wall or parapet  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet high. This in following the outline of

<sup>1</sup> *Raj* ; i-363, iii-350, 454. That *yantras* (*yantra* : *yander*) were machines or contrivances, is proved by the use of the word in modern Kashmiri, e.g. *Yandar* (spinning wheel), *Kadi-yandar* (carding machine), *Dosi-yanpar* (contrivance for setting mud-wall), etc.



the basement, preserves its octagonal shape. The terrace surrounding the temple is reached by three flights of stone steps, numbering respectively 6, 7 and 18, the last being encased between two walls. From the terrace another flight of 10 steps leads to the door of the temple. The interior is a chamber, circular in plan, with a basin containing a *lingam*. Its general shape is that of a cone, with four sides formed by the rectangular adjustment of eight gable-shaped slabs of masonry. The cone, which is about 25 feet in height, with a proportionate base, rests upon an octagonal raised platform which is about five feet above the terrace. The circumference of the platform is about 100 feet. The interior of the temple is 14 feet in diameter : the ceiling is flat and 11 feet high ; the walls which are  $7\frac{1}{2}$  feet thick, are covered with white plaster composed of gypsum, and the roof is supported by four octagonal limestone pillars. The whole of the building is of stone, which is laid throughout in horizontal courses, no cement appearing to have been used.

It appears from a reference in the *Rajatarangini* that this religious edifice on a commanding site, was first built by Jalauka, the son of the great emperor Ashoka, about 200 B.C. The temple was subsequently rebuilt and dedicated to Jyesthesvara by Gopaditya who reigned from A.D. 253 to 328. The hill was known as Gopadri and the village at its foot on the south is still called Gopkar. To this date may be ascribed the low enclosing wall and the plinth of the existing temple, but all the superstructure is evidently of a later date.

The temple shows the early Kashmiri style in a still experimental and simple stage. It tries to introduce the early Sikhara style and has still a one-storeyed gable pediment which is evident even now, despite the later reconstructions. Here also we find the early specimen of the horse shoe arch, prominent in the final stages of this architecture, as for example in Martand.

#### TEMPLE AT LODUV

The temple of Rudresa at Loduv about two miles on the road leading from Pampur to Avantipura, closely copies the structures of Gandhara in plan and broad details. It has a close resemblance to the old temple at Guniyar in the Swat valley. There is, however, a striking difference in the architectural design of Loduv and the temple at Guniyar. Whereas in the latter the barrenness of the cella is relieved internally by four recesses placed diagonally, at Loduv the row of projecting brackets which support the eaves of the roof are replaced by a simple cornice consisting of three courses of projecting filleted blocks. Here we notice the first impression of a dome. This and the simplicity of construction and absence of any internal or plastic decoration,

indicate its early age.

The ground plan of the main temple is a square of 24 feet. There is only one doorway to the W.S-W. Its head is semi-circular, with a pyramidal pediment slightly projected and divided into two portions, of which the upper one is plain and the other is occupied by a semi-circular ornament. The apex of the pediment reaches the top of the cornice which runs round the top of the walls on the outside. The roof is entirely gone.

The interior is a circle, the diameter of which diminishes from the ground upwards. The wall on the inside shows signs of fire having been used perhaps to destroy the roof which may have been of wood. The top of the doorway inside is formed by the underside of the course from which the cornice of the interior is projected.

The basement of the temple stands on a platform 48 feet square, faced with stone walls forming a sort of lower basement. The whole stands in the middle of a tank of very clear water which issues from two springs in the north-east corner. There is an ancient looking *lingam* of dark limestone,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  ft. high,  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ft. in diameter with eight flat faces, standing in the water near the springs which supply the tank.

The smaller of the Loduv temples stands a little above and behind the first. Its ground plan is a square of ten feet. It has only one doorway to the west with a square top covered by a pediment which rests upon the jambs of the door.

#### PRAVARESA AND NARASTHAN

More important, though less spectacular, are the ruins of the temple of Pravaresa which Stein<sup>1</sup> identifies with the enclosure of the cemetery of Baha-ud-din; and of the Ranaswamin temple (Ziarat of Pir Haji Muhammad) in Srinagar. These ruins which according to Kalhana go back to the sixth century A.D. show that the medieval Kashmir temple type with its vast court with an enclosure of chapels must have developed already though still in a very crude form. The peristyle had cellas without arches, the doors being simply covered with plain lintels. On the other hand, the corner chapels of the front facade which are so characteristic of Martand, Avantipura and Buniar can be traced here.

This is elaborated further in the construction plans of the temple at Narasthan about ten miles north-east of Avantipura. The date of this temple is uncertain, but it definitely belongs to the group described earlier, with the addition of an enclosure wall and imposing gateways—

<sup>1</sup> See Trans. of *Raj.*, Vol. II, p. 447.

a feature which finds its culmination in the plans of the magnificent Sun temple at Martand.

The situation is very picturesque, looking down the narrow valley while behind it the ground slopes up towards the lofty mountains of the Brariangan range. The temple stands in a walled enclosure about 65 feet square. The main entrance is on the west through an imposing portico ; the outer portal is arched, the pediment possessing the usual characteristics of the Aryan order of architecture. The outer vestibule measures eight feet by four feet ; in the middle is a square gateway opening into a second vestibule of rather larger dimensions.

The temple, which occupies the centre of the enclosure, is in general appearance similar to that of Loduv, but more imposing in its proportions and elaborate in details. Each side measures 15 feet above the plinth. The porch, which is on the west, projects rather more than three feet from the face of the wall.

The inner entrance is a square gateway  $6\frac{1}{2}$  feet high by  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet wide supported by pillars. Both this and the middle gateway of the north seem to have been fitted with stone doors. The inside chamber is  $8\frac{1}{2}$  feet square ; the walls are blank, with the exception of a small arched recess on the south side of the entrance. The flooring is of stone which has given way in the centre, where probably the image of Vishnu stood. About 8 feet from the ground there is a cornice, from which the roof seems to have tapered to a point, the walls are now standing to a height of 24 feet and the pinnacle was probably built about ten feet higher.

#### LALITADITYA'S FOUNDATIONS

The real patron and to some extent the founder of the sophisticated Aryan Style of Kashmir architecture was Lalitaditya who built the new city of Parihaspura with the imposing temples and *caityas*, the famous Sun-temple of Martand and the smaller but picturesque temples of Wangat and possibly some temples in the Punjab at Kallar, Ketas and Kafirkot (Bilot). In his constructions we notice a transformation achieved by the absorption of many new inspirations, ideas and techniques from the more developed civilizations in India and countries to her north and west. Like so many empire builders, Lalitaditya took artists from wherever he could obtain them and tried to mould different styles and techniques into a new imperial art bearing the impress of his own personality.

His principal minister, Cankuna, erected the great *stupa* at Parihaspura and other *stupas* at Pandrenthan, decorated with sculptures in the Wei and T'ang Chinese art. The great *caitya* of his of which the foundations have been unearthed, follows the Gandhara style of



architecture in its plan, and Kalhana records the installation in it of a huge Buddha image, modelled perhaps on the Bamiyan Colossus.

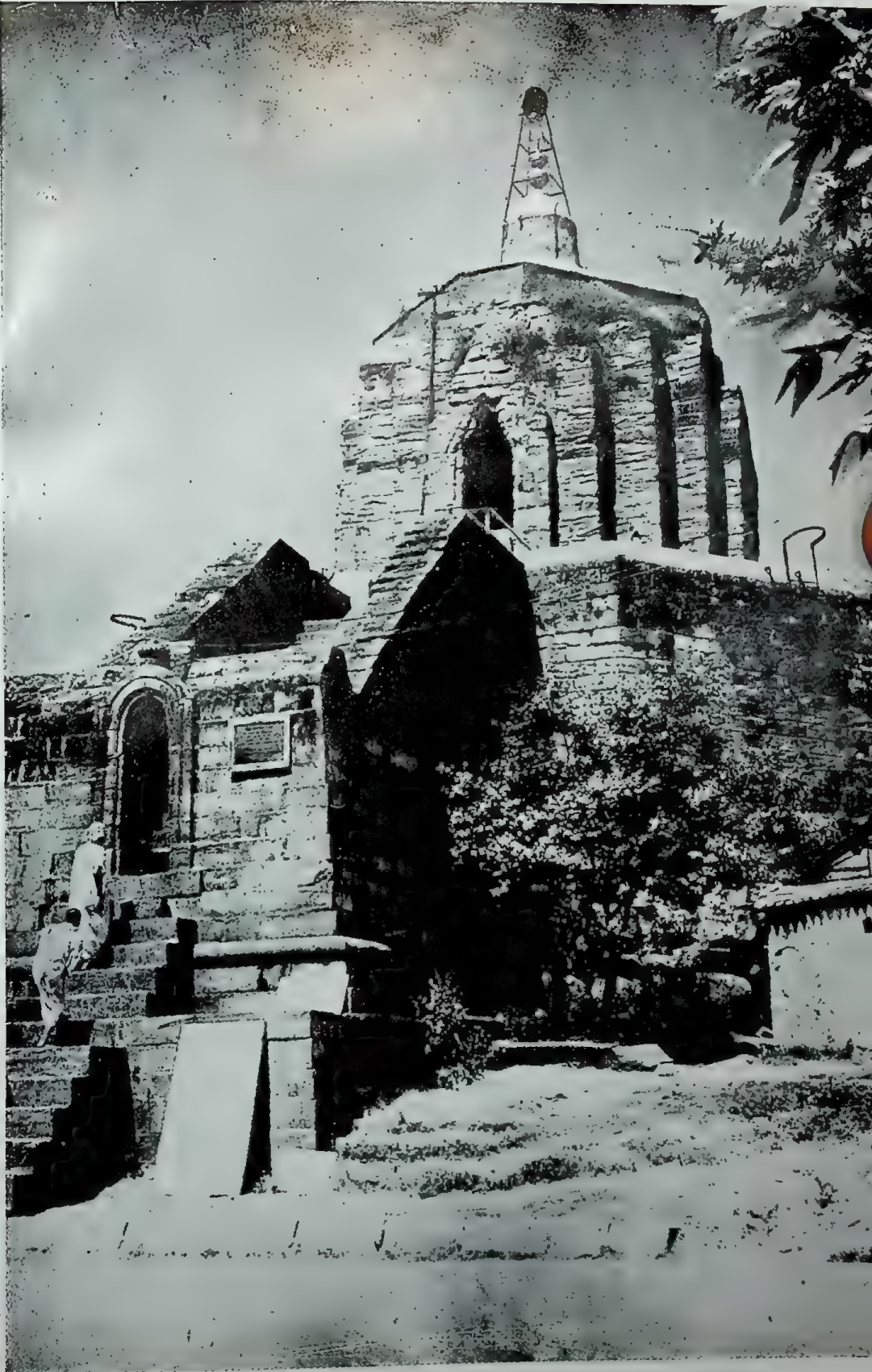
The ruins of the two famous temples of Parihasakesava and Muktakesava at Parihaspura show vast enclosed courts, surrounded by chapels bigger in scale than the ones at Narasthan—a plan on which the temple at Martand was also built.

#### MARTAND

Martand, the most impressive and grandest of all the ancient temples, occupies undoubtedly the finest situation in Kashmir. This noble ruin is the most striking in size and position of all the existing remains. The temple itself is not more than 40 feet high, but its solid walls and bold outlines, towering over the fluted pillars of the surrounding colonnade, give it an imposing appearance. There are no petty confused details, but all are distinct and massive and most admirably suited to the general character of the building. The mass of buildings consist of one lofty central edifice with a small detached wing on each side of the entrance, the whole standing in a large quadrangle, surrounded by a colonnade of fluted pillars with intervening trefoil headed recesses. The length of the outer side of the wall which is blank, is about 90 yards, that of the front is about 60 yards. There are in all eighty-four columns—a singularly appropriate number in a temple of the Sun, if, as is supposed, the number 84 is accounted sacred by the Hindus in consequence of its being the product of the number of days in the week and the number of signs in the Zodiac.

The remains of three gateways opening into the court are now standing. The principal of these fronts due west—towards Anantnag. It is also rectangular in shape and built with enormous blocks of limestone, six or eight feet in length and one of nine feet and of proportionate solidity, cemented with mortar. It is surprising how these huge stones were piled one upon the other to a great height with such exactitude. The central building is the most imposing structure and above all has (as the temples in Kashmir possess) in addition to the cella or sanctuary, a nave 18 feet square. The sanctuary alone is left entirely bare, the two other compartments being lined with rich panelings and sculptured niches. It has been conjectured that the roof was of pyramidal form and that the entrance chamber and wings were similarly carved. There would thus have been four distinct pyramids of which that over the inner chamber must have been the loftiest, the height of its pinnacle above the ground being about 75 feet.

The temple is 60 feet long and 38 feet wide, its height, when





A bird's-eye view of the Martand ruins. The snow-capped Pir Panjal range in the background is over 20 miles away.



complete must have been 75 feet. The courtyard that surrounds and encloses the temple, is a more remarkable object than the temple itself. Its internal dimensions are 220 by 142 feet. On each face is a central cella, larger and higher than the colonnade in which it is placed. The height is 30 feet and the pillars on each side are nine feet high—not lofty but they have a Grecian aspect which is interesting. It is thought that the whole of the interior of the quadrangle was originally filled with water to a level up to one foot of the base of the columns and that access to the temple was gained by a raised pathway of slabs supported on solid blocks at short intervals which connected the gateway flight of steps with that leading to the temple. The same kind of pathway stretched right across the quadrangle from one side doorway to the other. A constant supply of fresh water was kept up through a canal from the river Lidar, which was conducted along the side of the mountain for the service of the village close by.

Bates says that the interior must have been as imposing as the exterior. On ascending the flight of steps now covered by the ruins, the votary of the Sun entered a highly decorated chamber with a doorway on each side covered by a pediment with a trefoil-headed niche containing a bust of the Hindu triad. On the flanks of the main entrance as well as those of the side doorways were trefoil niches, each of which held a deity. The interior decorations of the roof can only be conjecturally determined, as there do not appear to be any ornamented stones that could, with certainty, be assigned to it.

Cunningham thinks that the erection of this Sun temple was suggested by the magnificent sunny prospect which its position commands. He remarks—"It overlooks the finest view in Kashmir, and perhaps in the known world. Beneath it lies the 'Paradise of the East', with its sacred streams and glens, its orchards and green fields, surrounded on all sides by vast snowy mountains whose lofty peaks seem to smile upon the beautiful valley below. The vast extent of the scene makes it sublime, for this magnificent view of Kashmir is no pretty peer in a half-mile glen, but the full display of a valley 30 miles in breadth and 84 miles in length, the whole of which lies beneath the can of the wonderful Martand."

What is most impressive in Martand is the apparently overwhelming size—to some degree an optic illusion—and the complete harmony of the buildings and of all their decorations and figure sculptures. As we have already seen, they represent the conclusion of a long development from the simple start depicted by the temples of Sankaracarya and Pravaresa, through the Parihaspura *stupas* and temples to the very zenith of Martand.

"On the other hand", records Dr. Goetz, "Martand stands not quite isolated. It has a smaller counterpart in the plains, the temple of Malot in the Salt Range. Malot raises the problems of the Martand temple even more acutely. For it has a facade of purely Roman-Corinthian half-pillars enclosing trifoliated archways crowned by a set of high *Sikharas*. If the first has already been proved characteristic for Lalitaditya's reign, the second was possible only in a time of the closest contact with Bihar and Bengal—*i.e.* when the king of Gauda had become Lalitaditya's vassal and prisoner."<sup>1</sup>

Martand has also quite a following of temples of the same lay-out and construction, though of simple execution, as for example Wangat and Buniar, which must belong to the same period.

#### WANGAT TEMPLES

Wangat in the Sindh valley is the site of some ruined temples near the spring called Naran Nag, at the foot of the Bhutsher or Bhutesvara spur of the Haramukh peak. They are in two groups, situated at a distance of about 100 yards from each other.

One group consists of six buildings, all more or less ruined. The remains of an enclosing wall, measuring 176 feet by 130 feet, may still be traced, although there is no evidence of the form it originally had. The largest temple of the group measures 24 feet square and has a projection on each of its four sides, measuring 3 feet by  $15\frac{1}{2}$  feet. The main block is surmounted by a pyramidal roof of rubble, formerly, no doubt, faced with stone; and the gables which terminated the porch-like projections on all four sides, can still be traced. There are two entrances facing east and west. Not far from the group is a platform, rectangular in shape (100 feet by 67 feet) which appears to have been the basement of some building or temple. A colonnade once existed all round it—numerous bases of pillars are to be seen in their places on one of the longer sides of the rectangle, and several fragments of fluted columns are lying about, their average diameter being two feet. Its chief features are the size of the structural units and the resultant largeness of its parts, inspired possibly by the great scale of the natural surroundings.

About 20 yards to the north-east of the platform are the ruins of the second group of temples, eleven in number, with the remains of a gateway in the centre about 22 feet wide, similar to that belonging to the first group. The principal one among them is 25 feet square with projections on each face.

<sup>1</sup> Goetz *Art and Letters*, XXVII, No. 1, p. 8.

The Chief peculiarities of these ruins are the number of temples contained within the same enclosing wall, and the absence of symmetry in their arrangement. In antiquity some of the ruins are supposed to rank next to the Sankaracarya temple. Major Cole assigned their age to about the commencement of the Christian era. Lalitaditya built a temple for Siva-Jyesthesa which Stein thinks is the principal shrine in the western group.

#### AVANTIPURA TEMPLES

The architectural trends of the Karkota period reached a logical culmination in the next generation under the Utpalas. The two temples of Avantisvamin and Avantesvara, ruins of which are still extant, adorned the city of Avantipura built on a commanding site overlooking a bend in the river Jhelum, eighteen miles south-east of Srinagar.

Both these temples are now shapeless mass of ruins, but the gateways of both are standing and the colonnade of the smaller temple, which had been completely buried under ground, has been excavated. The style corresponds with that of the Martand quadrangle, but the semi-attached pillars of the arched recesses are enriched with elaborate carving of very varied character, while the large detached columns are somewhat less elegantly proportioned.

We find in these temples and the one built by Samkaravarman at Pattan, "an increased refinement of form, a more polished effect generally, evidently a reflection of that riper cultural atmosphere which prevailed during the reign of Avantivarman."

After the temples belonging to the period of the Utpala rulers not much of note remains of the Kashmir style of architecture. A few temples notably those of Buniar and Uri on the Jhelum valley road depict the same stereotyped and ossified features. The temple at Buniar is in a most perfect condition in the Valley and owes its escape from destruction to its remote situation.

#### PANDRENTHAN

By the beginning of the tenth century the growth of the style had come to an end, as owing largely to political circumstances, temple building received little encouragement after that date. Small shrines continued to be built, and in them there are some features showing progress of the style in details. A perfect example is that of the small temple at Pandrenthan, three miles to the south of Srinagar, built by Meruvardhana in the middle of the tenth century A.D. Built in an artificial tank 40 yards square, the temple is a perfect



type of the later development and the most modern example of the true Kashmiri style extant. It is 18 feet square with a projecting portico on each side and displays a confused exuberance of decoration, more especially the repetition of pediment within trefoil. The domed roof is well worth inspection, being covered with sculptures of classic design.

There are several other shrines, some much smaller than Pandrenthan and some monolithic such as at Payar, Mammal, Kother and Bumzu, which illustrate the decline of the style.

#### TEMPLES IN JAMMU

The Kashmirian style of architecture spread out of the Valley to the Punjab Himalayas, particularly to Jammu principalities, Kangra and Chamba. We have typical examples in the temple ruins in Babor, and Billavar (ancient Vallapura) in Jammu. Babor about 22 miles from Jammu city has been identified with Babbapura of the *Rajatarangini* and was the ancient capital of the Dogras. The principal remains are a group of seven temples. An inscription in Sarada script reveals that these temples were built in the eleventh century A.D. The main temple is of "great solidity and considerable beauty; the chief feature being a hall whose roof was held up by eight fluted columns supporting beams of stone ten feet in length." The whole mass of stone was ornamented with carving.

The decorative features of the Kashmir temples and their Indo-Aryan style is quite apparent in these ruins, which "incidentally gives additional corroboration to the impression one derives from reading Kalhana's account of these centuries (A.D. 800 to 1150) that there must have been considerable political and economic intercourse between the Kashmir Valley and these sub-montane tracts."

Billavar, about sixty-five miles from Jammu, is the site of a fine medieval temple known as Billavakesvara. Its "spire is profusely ornamented externally, the ornament consisting mainly of floral scrolls, flower and vase decoration and niches with stepped pedimental roofs filled with decorative lozenges and figures of gods."<sup>1</sup> The temple dates back to the eleventh century A.D.

#### CULTURAL UNITY OF INDIA

Nothing perhaps brings out in bolder relief the picture of the unity of India from time immemorial than the cultural fabrique of ancient Kashmir. Despite its geographical isolation we find this small

<sup>1</sup> *Raj.*, v-170-71.

kingdom playing a prominent role in enriching the cultural life which pulsated throughout the length and breadth of India. For, it was early in its history that the Valley was settled by the Indo-Aryan immigrants from the plains of the Punjab, and having inherited the Vedic art and culture they developed it to a remarkable degree.

The first historical figure that we come across in the *Rajatarangini* is Ashoka who brought the Valley and the neighbouring territory into his vast empire. He personally visited this beautiful land bringing with him Buddhist missionaries to preach the doctrine of the Buddha. This had a profound effect on the cultural life of the country, as Kashmir thenceforth became the fountain-head of Mahayana and an advance post of Indian culture. From there went forth in the time of Kanishka and after, a number of missionaries to distant regions of Central Asia and China who carried the Doctrine of the Buddha to those countries. This further forged the links with the art and the cultural centres in the rest of India. For, apart from becoming politically a part of the country under Kanishka, several Buddhist scholars and 'acaryas' made the Valley the headquarters of their activities. Among these were the celebrated Nagarjuna, Asvagosh, Vasubandhu, Dharmatrata, and a host of others. Similarly Kashmirian Buddhist scholars adorned the Vikramasila and Nalanda Universities.

A further bond of unity was the systematic study and cultivation of the Sanskrit language. In fact all the literature produced in Kashmir on Buddhism was in Sanskrit. We have already surveyed the enormous contribution of Kashmir to Sanskrit poetry, drama, philosophy and literature in general. And it is not hard to imagine the constant flow of scholars and savants from Kashmir to different centres of learning in the rest of India and vice versa.

In philosophy and aesthetics the Pandits of Kashmir made such notable contribution that they were in great demand at centres of learning in the rest of India. Similar was the case with Kashmiri poets and dramatists. Bilhana's is an outstanding example. But long before him we find a poor Pandit, Matrigupta, repairing to the court of Vikramaditya-Harsa where his merit was recognised by the king who bestowed on him the viceroyalty of Kashmir. The family of Sarangadeva who wrote his *Sangitaratnakara*, and other works served under the Yadavas of Devagiri. Bilhana and Sarangadeva were not the only Kashmiris to have taken service under Vikramaditya VI Tribhavanmalla. The Lakshmeswar inscription of the year 27 of the king refers to His Majesty's high minister and general Bhimanaya or Bhima, a native of Kashmir (Ep. Ind. Vol. XII, p. 28). Then again the Bodh-Gaya inscription of Asokachalla of Lakshmana Samvat 51, makes

mention of a Pandit of Kashmir, Abhaya Sriraja, who was the royal preceptor. Another celebrated monk of Kashmir Vinaya Srimitra chose his abode the Kanakastupavihara in the district of Tipperah.

That the current of culture was flowing from both directions is amply proved by the installation at his court by Lalitaditya of the famous poets Vakpatiraja, the author of *Gaudavaho* and Bhavabhuti who has given us that masterpiece of lyric-cum-devotional poetry, *Malatimadhava*. Earlier, we are told by Kalhana, several scholars were got from other parts of the country in the time of Abhimanyu to restore the study of Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* which had gone out of vogue in the Valley. A similar restoration is referred to in the reign of Jayapida.

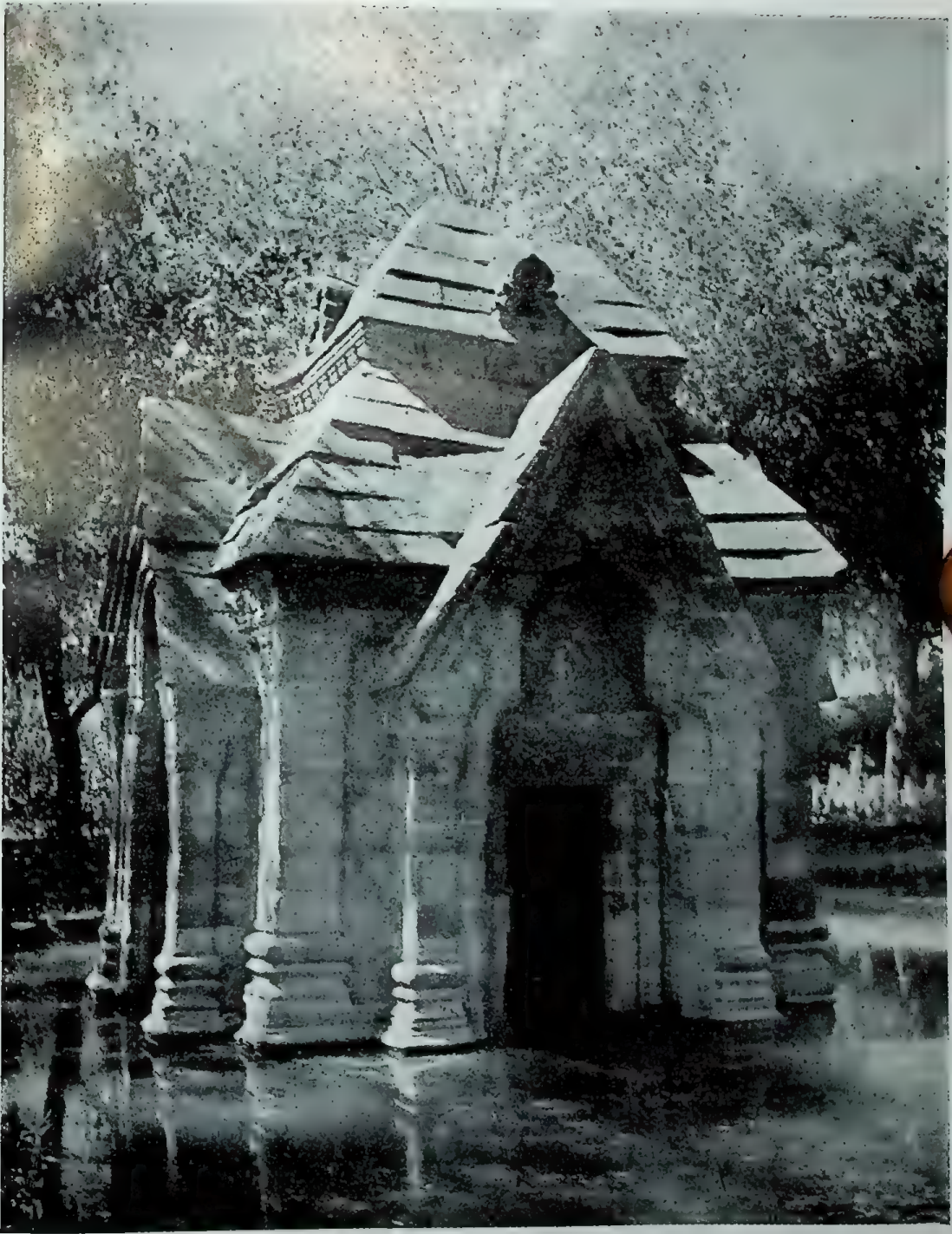
Many famous writers and philosophers of Kashmir trace their origin to ancestors who came from different parts of India. For instance, Jayanta Bhatta's and his equally famous son Abhinanda's ancestors came from Gauda (Bengal). Kshemendra mentions the presence in Kashmir of students from Gauda and other parts of India. Abhinavagupta's ancestors came to Kashmir from Kanyakubja during the reign of Lalitaditya.

In music, dance and drama, we find a similar interchange of ideas. Whereas Kashmiri musicians acquired proficiency in North Indian *ragas*, we find at the same time that under Harsa masters from Karnataka were also invited to give lessons to musicians of Kashmir. Harsa also introduced the Karnataka type of coins as well as South Indian fashions in dress and ornaments. In the numerous sculptures found in Kashmir, we notice the Indian dress—the *choli* and the *dhoti*. When Kashmiri artists acquired mastery of the Gandhara style of art, they produced the images of Buddha and Bodhisatvas. This was the art which the Kashmiri missionaries carried across the frontiers of India to China and Tibet. And in architecture too the temple design and the ground plan very much followed the fundamentals of the temple plans in the rest of the country.

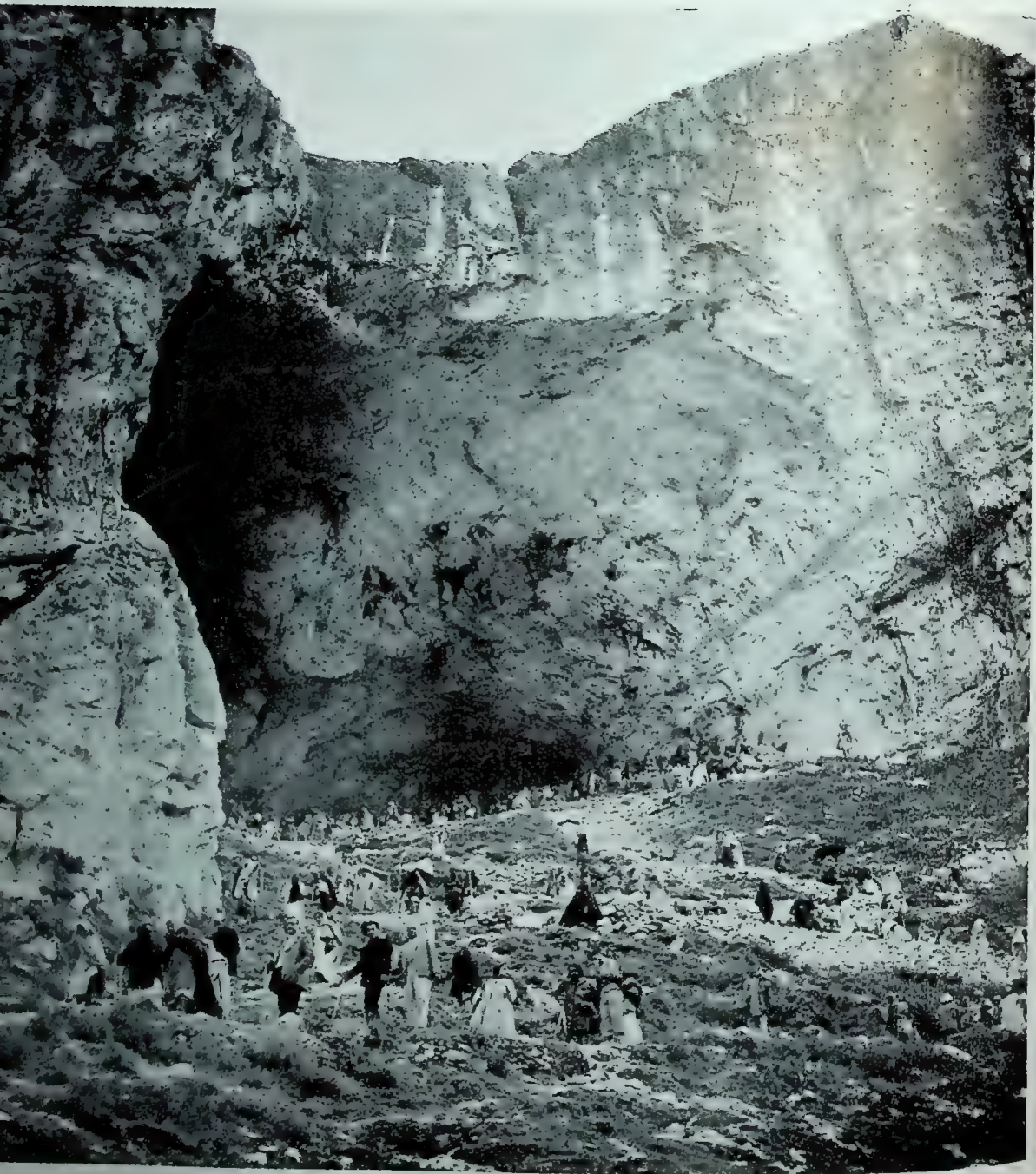
The administrative machinery in Kashmir was set up on the traditional pattern of the "eighteen offices of State" as mentioned in Mahabharata, and in the military organisation, the model was set by the Mauryan generals.

In commerce, trade, and social organisation there has been one pattern all over India—the same spirit animating the cultural and religious life of the country. Pilgrims from Kashmir whether Hindu or Buddhist visit the holy places from Rameswaram to Badrinath and Dwarka to Puri. We are told by Kalhana that Kashmiris were exempted from payment of pilgrims tax at Gaya. And year after year devotees





The temple at Pandrenthan (Puranadhisthana or ancient capital)  
near Srinagar (10th Century A.D.)



Pilgrims at the holy cave of Amarnath



of Siva from all over the country go on pilgrimage to the holy cave of Amarnath in Kashmir.

So whether in Sanskrit learning, or philosophy, or art and architecture, religion or science, a common life has been pulsating all over the country from ancient times, flowering into that broad-based 'unity in diversity' which is the unique contribution of India to human civilization and progress.





PART TWO

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MEDIEVAL KASHMIR

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●  
THE SULTANATE  
[ 1339—1586 ]

MUGHAL RULE  
[ 1586—1753 ]

AFGHAN SATRAPY  
[ 1753—1819 ]  
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## CHAPTER NINE

### FOUNDATION OF THE SULTANATE

THE RISE OF ISLAM is a marvel of history. Born in the beginning of the seventh century A.D. it enveloped, a century later, a vast stretch of territory extending from the Atlantic to the Indus and from the Caspian to the Cataracts of the Nile, including Spain and Portugal, some of the most fertile regions of France, the whole of the northern coast of Africa, Upper and Lower Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia, Armenia, Persia, Afghanistan, Baluchistan and Transoxiana.

By the beginning of the eighth century of the Christian era the Arabs had carried their arms as far as the western confines of India and bore sway in Makaran. Simultaneously they brought under their rule the whole of Central Asia, threatening the empire of China from there and penetrating to the kingdom of Kabul.

#### EARLY CONTACT WITH ISLAM

Geographically situated as it was, Kashmir did not fall in their line of advance, but we find that during the reign of Karkota dynasty of Kashmir the Arabs were becoming a source of serious menace to the Kashmir kingdom. First Candrapida and then the great king Lalitaditya, through their embassy to the Chinese court asked for aid from the Celestial Emperor and proposed an alliance against the rising power of the Arabs. During his numerous campaigns in Central Asia, Afghanistan and in Western India, Lalitaditya and his army definitely came across and clashed with the armies of the Arabs and had thus an opportunity of coming in contact with the followers of the new faith.

In India the province of Sind was the first to experience the impact of Islam through Muhammad Bin Qasim's expedition. Bin Qasim defeated the ruler of Sind, Dahir, whose sway extended to the borders of Kashmir. We learn from an original source, the *Chach Nama*, that Bin Qasim had proceeded from Multan to the frontiers of Kashmir and at the same time sent an expedition to Kanauj. But here he met with little success. Candrapida, who ruled in Kashmir, appealed to the Chinese Emperor for help against this Arab threat. But before Qasim could achieve any material success, he was recalled to Damascus by Caliph Sulaiman and so the Arab danger was removed for the time being.

Dahir's son, Jaisya, took refuge in Kashmir after the defeat of his father. He was accompanied by a Syrean, Hanim by name, who took this opportunity to propagate Islam among his immediate acquaintances and friends.

Bin Qasim's rule was short-lived and the Arabs left the shores of India without founding a kingdom. Surprise has often been felt why the Arabs stopped merely at the gates of India, and even failed to retain what they had conquered. One of the chief reasons, according to Majumdar, was the check they received in their onward progress at the hands of the imperial forces of Lalitaditya who having conquered Malwa and Gujarat, defeated the Arab forces advancing under the energetic governor Junaid, somewhere near the borders of Kashmir which extended to Western India. He sent an embassy to China for making common cause against the Arabs, but though no help was forthcoming from that quarter, he was able to defeat the Arabs by his own unaided efforts.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the spread of Islam in India from the north is different. The Arabs never carried the standard of this religion far beyond the Indus, and though the doctrine of the new faith was accepted by many, it had lost its political unity, and the control of its "destinies had passed from the hands of the Arabian successors of Muhammad into those of independent dynasties acknowledging the Caliph at Baghdad merely as a spiritual head."

#### MAHMUD'S INVASION

In the early part of the tenth century the descendants of Saman, a Persian chieftain of Balkh who had accepted Islam, extended their dominion over Transoxiana, Persia and the greater part of the present kingdom of Afghanistan, but their great empire waned almost as rapidly as it had waxed and their power gradually passed into the hands of the Turkish slaves to whom they had been wont to entrust the duties of the State. It fell to the lot of one of the successors of these slave kings, Mahmud Ghazni, to prepare the ground for a Muslim kingdom in the northern and subsequently in western India.

Ghazni's several invasions of India are well known to every student of Indian history. Kashmir at that time, internally weakened and being thus an easy and inviting prey to the rising tide of the Islamic forces, reverted under hostile circumstances, to a policy of exclusiveness and thoroughly sealed its frontiers. Says Alberuni :

"They are particularly anxious about the natural strength of

<sup>1</sup> Majumdar, *The Classical Age*, p. 174

their country and, therefore, take always much care to keep a strong hold upon the entrances and roads leading into it. In consequence, it is very difficult to have any commerce with them. In former times, they used to allow one or two foreigners to enter their country, particularly Jews, but at present do not allow any Hindu whom they do not know personally to enter, much less other people."

It is easy to shut out armies and men, but ideas and cultural ferments have, all along the course of world history, proved too strong for any artificial barriers. The fact that Alberuni without having visited the Valley personally, was capable of giving exact details of its geography, shows that he must have come in contact with a few learned Pandits of Kashmir who "in old days, as at present, were accustomed to leave their homes for distant places, wherever their learning could secure for them a livelihood." He is also responsible for the statement that due to the rapacities of Ghazni most of the learned Brahmans of Northern India fled to Kashmir, which must have enormously influenced the cultural growth of the Valley and also brought in some elementary ideas about Islam and the Prophet.

Kashmir had a special reason to attract the attention of Ghazni and his armies. From ancient times Gandhara or north-western frontier of India, had forged strong political and cultural ties with Kashmir and laterly when Kabul and its dependencies passed into the hands of the Hindu Sahiya dynasty under Lalliya, a Brahman, who overthrew the last of the Turki Sahiya kings—the offshoots of the Kushans—the rulers of the two kingdoms entered into matrimonial relations among themselves. When the Sahiya kingdom under Jaipala received the first onslaught of Ghazni's forces, he looked for, and received, aid from his friend and kinsman, the then ruler of Kashmir. The last of the Sahiyas, Trilochanpala, though aided by the Kashmir king Samgramaraja (1003-28 A.D.) was finally defeated by the forces of Ghazni and Kalhana devotes a good number of stanzas in his famous *Rajatarangini* to lament the fall of that great kingdom. Trilochanpala made some more feeble attempts to regain his throne and kingdom but met with no success.

After the final destruction of the Sahiya kingdom and the dispersal of its great army, the way was opened for a raid into India and Mahmud marched to the fortress of Nagarkot in Kangra which he occupied without much opposition. The independent Hindu kingdom of Kashmir was a thorn in his side and he made up his mind to reduce it during one of his subsequent invasions. In 1015 A.D. he invaded Kashmir *via* the Tosamaidan Pass and invested Lohkot or



Loharkot, a strong fortress on the outskirts of the Valley. But thanks to the dogged resistance offered by Kashmiris and the inaccessibility of the mountain paths, he had to retire in ignominy. The great secret of his success against the forces of Sahiyas had been his redoubtable cavalry which, though effective in the plains, could not be deployed advantageously in inaccessible and difficult mountain paths. The siege of the fortress continued for two months, but on seeing that the weather was becoming unfavourable and that the Kashmiris were receiving fresh reinforcements every day, he raised the siege and retired. "This was his first serious reverse in India. His army lost its way in the unfamiliar highlands and its retreat was interrupted by flooded valleys, but at length after much toil it debouched into the open country and returned to Ghazni in disorder."<sup>1</sup>

In 1021 Mahmud, to regain his lost prestige, again invaded Kashmir by the same route. But again the fortress of Lohkot stood in his way. After an unsuccessful siege which lasted a month, snow fell and fearing the destruction of his forces as in the previous invasion Mahmud gave up the attempt at its reduction and withdrew. This convinced him of the impregnable strength of the Kashmir kingdom, and he abandoned the idea of invading Kashmir again.<sup>2</sup>

#### PENETRATION FROM THE NORTH

It was from another quarter that Kashmir faced the threat of the advancing forces of the new faith. Towards the north, in Central Asia, the Muhammadanised Turks were becoming more aggressive and were seeking new fields for their activities. A small force of these Muslim Turks under their leader, Salara Vismaya, appears to have extended its influence to the outskirts of the Valley during the troubled days of the civil war between Sussala and Bhiksacara (12th century A.D.) and the latter invited their aid in an attack on Lohara, the seat of Sussala. Earlier, during the reign of Harsa (1038-89), we come across the Turuska (Turkish) captains employed in his army and enjoying his favour. Harsa himself seems to have been influenced by the teaching of Islam which denounced idolatry and his destruction of temples and images evoked resentment in Kalhana who gives him the epithet of "Turuska", i.e. Muhammadan. Marco Polo, the Venetian traveller, also refers to the presence of Muslims in Kashmir about 1277 A.D. Meanwhile on its outskirts the conversion of Darada tribes on the Indus was making rapid progress.

It can safely be deduced from the above that Islamic influence

<sup>1</sup> *Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 18.

<sup>2</sup> Nazim, *Mahmud of Ghazni*, pp. 104-105.

was making itself felt in Kashmir long before the country had a Muslim king. Islamic missionaries and adventurers came into Kashmir and preached the doctrine among the people who were thoroughly saturated with the tenets of Brahmanism and Buddhism. The preachings of these first missionaries do not seem to have produced any deep impression and it required all the religious fervour and devotion of selfless divines and *dervishes* like Bulbul Shah to convince the Kashmiri people and convert them to the creed and philosophy of the new religion.

#### CONDITIONS FAVOURABLE TO ISLAM

The propagation of the new creed was greatly facilitated by the internal feuds and strifes among the rulers and the powerful landlords. It is but natural that under such chaotic political conditions the fate of the common man was all but happy. He had to suffer from the rapacities of the agents of the king as well as those of the lords. His land remained uncultivated, he could not safely conduct his business and his very life was crushed out of him. Added to these were the natural calamities that came in quick succession, famines, earthquakes and fires, which further reduced him to an abject position. Any departure, therefore, from his traditional but out-dated social customs and political set-up, which even in a small measure restored his confidence, was welcome to him. The contacts established by the Muslim soldiers and adventurers among the general population, must have resulted in a good number of converts, seeing that Islam offered them a square deal and freedom from the oppressive rites and rituals.

The name associated with the earliest propagation of Islam in Kashmir is that of Bulbul Shah who is said to have visited Kashmir first in the time of Raja Sahadeva. He was a widely travelled Musavi Syed from Turkistan having enjoyed a long stay at Baghdad. He was the disciple of Shah Niamat Ullah Farsi of the Suhrawardi school of Sufis. Being a devout Sufi he cast an enormous influence on the people amongst whom he worked and lived a life of complete self-abnegation. And it was due to him that Kashmir came under the rule of the first Muslim king—Rinchin.

#### RINCHIN (1320-23 A.D.)

The life of Rinchin, the Tibetan, is as adventurous as it is interesting. Originally a prince of Ladakh, Rinchin had to flee for safety after a battle with the Baltis who had earlier killed his father. Though he had avenged his father's death by killing a number of Balti chiefs, his position in Ladakh became precarious and together with a number of

his followers, he came to Kashmir and was given protection by Ramacandra, the commander-in-chief of the then king, Sahadeva. Meanwhile Ramacandra who appears to have been a hospitable person, had taken under his service and protection another man, Shah Mir, a Muslim adventurer from Swat.<sup>1</sup>

At this time Kashmir witnessed an unprecedented orgy of loot, arson, murder and rape at the hands of an unscrupulous and cruel invader, Dulchu, a Tartar chief from Turkistan, ruled at the time by the descendants of Chaghtay, the son of Chingiz Khan. Dulchu's army of sixty thousand mounted troops consisted of Turks and Mongols. Entering the Valley over the Jhelum valley route, he did not meet any effective opposition, but on the other hand king Sahadeva offered him a large present of money raised by taxing his subjects including Brahmans, in the hope that the invader would turn back. But this had a contrary effect. The rapacious Dulchu's appetite for gold was whetted and he ordered the march on the capital. Sahadeva fled to Kishtwar leaving the affairs of the State in the hands of Ramacandra.

Rinchin and Shah Mir together with their followers came to the aid of the Kashmiris and did their bit in opposing the unscrupulous and cruel invader. But it was all in vain. The towns were heaps of ruins, the land was depopulated, the armies were dispersed, the fortresses taken by storm. Kashmir was a rich land, offering abundant scope for plunder ; but what would happen after that ? Impoverishing the Valley during a stay of eight months, Dulchu, finding that provisions were scarce, tried to get out by the southern passes, but he could not escape Nature's wrath. Snow overtook him and his whole army together with thousands of male and female prisoners perished. Then the Gaddis from Kishtwar entered the Valley on a raiding expedition but were driven back by Ramacandra who now assumed the title of king.

Rinchin who had gained the goodwill of the people now became more ambitious. Finding that he had no chances against Ramacandra in an open fight he resorted to a mean stratagem. He sent his Tibetan followers, disguised as simple pedlars, into the inner precincts of the palace. When all suspicion had been removed he and his followers with arms concealed under their long robes, entered Ramacandra's quarters and before his guards could come to his help, murdered him in cold blood. Proclaiming himself king he, in order to wipe off all opposition, married Ramacandra's daughter, Kota, and also appointed his son Ravancandra as his prime minister and later as the governor of

<sup>1</sup> See pp. 156-162 above.



the Pargana of Lar.<sup>1</sup>

Having usurped the throne he wanted further to strengthen his position by adopting the religion of his subjects. Calling Shri Devaswami, the religious and spiritual head of the Saivas, he begged him, in all humility to admit him to the Hindu fold.

The Pandits held a solemn conclave, at the end of which they, with one voice, refused him the privilege of calling himself a Hindu. "But why" ? asked Rinchin. Simply because the caste of his birth was doubtful, was the answer. Disappointed and disgraced he passed a restless night. Was there no spiritual solace for him ? Suddenly, in the early hours of the morning, he was roused from his disturbed sleep by the sharp and loud voice of the Muazin.—"There is no God but God and Muhammad is His Prophet." Looking out of the window he observed the devout Bulbul Shah at prayer. He went to his presence. Could he admit him to his creed ? Could he satisfy his spiritual hunger ? Bulbul Shah comforted him and told him to have faith in God and the Prophet. Rinchin was thus admitted to Islam and became the first Muslim king of Kashmir.

Thus exactly three hundred and five years after Mahmud Ghazni's unsuccessful invasion, Islam attained the status of State religion in Kashmir. But so imperceptible was the change that it

"did neither affect the independence of the country nor at first materially change its political and cultural condition. The administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans, for whom a change of religion presented no advantage and who accordingly retained their inherited status, together with its literary traditions. Sanskrit remained for a considerable period after the end of Hindu rule the medium of official communication and record in Kashmir as shown by the *Lokaprakasha*. The manifold forms for official documents, reports, etc., which are contained in this remarkable handbook of Kashmirian administrative routine, are drawn up in a curious Sanskrit jargon full of Persian and Arabic words which must have become current in Kashmir soon after the introduction of Islam."<sup>2</sup>

#### A STRONG ADMINISTRATOR

Bearing no rancour towards the Hindus, Rinchin applied his energies to alleviate the sufferings of the people after the terrible

1 Dutt, *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 29.

2 Stein, Trans. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. I, p. 130.

invasion of Dulchu. "The country", says Jonaraja, "was weary of trouble and disorder, and Shree Rinchin give it rest under the shelter of his arm. When the dark days disappeared, the people of Kashmir witnessed again all the festivities which they had beheld under their former kings".<sup>1</sup>

It appears that the Lavanyas, the professional soldiers, were inflicting untold miseries on the people and the previous kings had been unable to suppress them and put them under proper discipline. Rinchin curbed their propensities for loot and murder and also sowed seeds of disunity amongst them, thus weakening them further. The king and the people were left in peace and "like the birds in the sky the king roamed easily in that thorny wood where even the God of love had become bewildered."<sup>2</sup>

Rinchin ruled with a firm but just hand. He dispensed justice impartially. The Chronicler mentions the instance of the son of a powerful lord, named Timi, who had forcibly taken milk from a maid and drank it. The milkwoman instantly complained to the king who, in order to set an example of it, ordered his belly to be cut open and lo ! the milk flowed out from his stomach. Another story of his wise handling of a case is mentioned. While left to graze in the mountains the mare of a peasant gave birth to a foal, which was nursed by another mare whose foal had died a few days earlier. When the mares were brought to the village, a dispute ensued as to the ownership of the foal. Each claimed it to be the offspring of his mare. The king took the mares and the foal in a boat to the middle of the lake and pushed out the foal into the water. The real mother jumped after him and thus the riddle was resolved.

Rinchin founded a town after his name and built a hospice for Bulbul Shah, his spiritual guide. He endowed the hospice and the free kitchen for the poor with the revenue collections from several village. The mosque and the hospice were later destroyed by a fire and a smaller mosque was built at the place.

Notwithstanding his great qualities as an administrator, the king was not left in peace. A rebellion was raised by some disgruntled feudal lords headed by Tuka, his former prime minister. Through his courage and presence of mind he succeeded in putting it down, but in the skirmish, he received a severe wound on his head. The wound would not heal and after a few months of painful existence he died of it, having ruled for a brief period of over three years. Before his

1 Dutt, *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 19.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 19.

death he left his son and wife, Kota Rani, to the care of Shah Mir who having remained loyal to him throughout, had risen to the position of chief minister.

After the death of Rinchin, his son, Haider, who was an infant, did not succeed him, but instead Kota Rani and Shah Mir invited Udyanadeva, the brother of Sahadeva, who ruled the country for fifteen years. He married Rinchin's widow, who became the *de facto* ruler of Kashmir. "She was, as it were, the mind, and the king, the body who carried out her orders."<sup>1</sup>

### UDYANADEVA (1323-38)

It was during his time that Kashmir suffered from another invader, Achala, a Turkish leader who entered the Valley by the Pir Panjal route laying waste the places he passed through. Like his brother, Udyanadeva too was a weakling and at the first sign of the approaching invader he fled to Ladakh. Queen Kota with very little provisions left for her troops and being at the head of a house divided against itself, realized that she had absolutely no chance of making a successful resistance to the ferocious and greedy troops of Achala. Feigning submission she sent word to him that as the throne of Kashmir had fallen vacant due to the king's flight she and her ministers would be only too glad to instal him on the throne provided he sent his and his ally's troops back. Achala, blinded by avarice, believed her word and keeping only a detachment with him in Kashmir sent the rest of his troops back home. Then Kota broke her word, attacked and destroyed the detachment and capturing Achala had him publicly beheaded. Udyanadeva finding that he had nobody to be afraid of, returned ; but to all intents and purposes the kingdom was ruled by the versatile queen.

During Achala's invasion, Shah Mir played a hero's part. He did his best to organise the slender forces of the kingdom and came to the succour of the people at a time of national emergency. He and his Kashmiri followers inflicted crushing blows on the invader. For this and his other acts of charity, grace and good organisation he became the idol of the people. This invited the king's jealousy. But Shah Mir received tacit support from queen Kota due to his being the guardian of her son, Haider. Reduced to the position of a puppet, the king spent his last days in prayer and passed away quietly on Shivaratri night in the year 1338 A.D.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 24.



## KOTA RANI (1338-39)

The death of the king was the signal for a struggle for power between the queen and Shah Mir. Kota Rani fearing the latter's popularity kept the fact of the king's demise a secret for four days, hoping to gain time to entrench herself. For some time things moved on calmly, but the queen wanting to have Shah Mir superseded showed favour to Bhikshana Bhatta, the guardian of her second son. Shah Mir cleverly managed a stratagem and getting hold of him unawares murdered him in cold blood. This enraged the queen and in order to avenge him she ordered her forces to besiege Shah Mir's house. The clever Mir so manoeuvred his forces that the tables were turned against queen Kota herself and she was in turn besieged in her own palace. Her forces were dispersed and she fell a prisoner into his hands. The last days of Kota Rani are shrouded in mystery. According to one version Shah Mir forced her to marry him but while entering his bed-chamber she committed suicide. Thus ended the life of one of the most romantic figures in the history of Kashmir.

## SULTAN SHAMS-UD-DIN (1339-42)

Shah Mir who now ascended the throne under the name of Sultan Shams-ud-din, is the founder of the Sultan dynasty of Kashmir whose kings ruled Kashmir for 222 years. This period is important in the long annals of Kashmir in as much as Islam was firmly planted on the soil of Kashmir and the country and its people acquired an ascendancy in art and literature during the reign of one of the most illustrious sovereigns of this dynasty—Zain-ul-abidin. This period acquires importance also on account of the rise of the popular Kashmiri language through which great saints and poets like Lalleshwari and Nund Rishi expounded their philosophy. The introduction of the Shia religion by Mir Shams-ud-din Iraqi is also important. The official routine of the government was carried on in the Sanskrit language for at least one century after the accession of Shah Mir to the throne till under Zain-ul-abidin it was changed to Persian. The Persian and Arabic artistic and cultural influences penetrated into Kashmir during this period resulting in a synthesis of Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu cultures.

Sultan Shams-ud-din conducted the affairs of the State in a wise and statesman-like manner. The country had been torn by the ravages of Dulchu and Achala and the first need of the people was complete peace. Shah Mir saw to it that the people enjoyed this blessing and the Chronicler mentions that the king "assuaged the troubles of Kashmir and changed its condition."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dutt. *Op. Cit.*, p. 32.

The later Hindu kings had been atrocious tyrants, whose avowed policy had been to leave to their subjects nothing beyond a bare subsistence. He ruled on more liberal principles, abolished the arbitrary taxes and the cruel methods of extorting them, and fixed the State's share of produce at one sixth.

Kishtwar which may rightly be called a side-valley of Kashmir had been the source of trouble to him. The Lon or Lavanya tribe, the turbulent military caste, still following the Hindu religion, raised a rebellion against Shah Mir. It has already been noted that these Lavanyas were the adherents of queen Kota. Shah Mir sent a strong force against them and though pressed hard was able to suppress them completely.

During his short reign of three years Shah Mir endeared himself to the people. He had already spent the major portion of his life amongst the Kashmiris and throughout had shared their joys and sorrows. His death naturally caused a great deal of grief amongst his subjects.

Shah Mir had four sons, Jamshid, Ali Sher, Shirshamaq and Hindal. The eldest succeeded him but reigned for no more than a year, being dethroned in 1343 A.D. by his next brother, Ali Sher, who ascended the throne under the title of Alau-ud-din.

#### SULTAN ALAU-UD-DIN (1343-54)

ALAU-UD-DIN's reign which lasted for eleven years (1343—54 A.D.) was mainly spent in repairing the ravages caused by the heartless invaders, Dulchu and Achala. During the second year of his rule a severe famine occurred in Kashmir and he is said to his credit, he left no stone unturned in alleviating the sufferings of the people. His reign is also outstanding for his building a huge *serai*, or resting place, for travellers from Central Asia, which shows the close commercial ties with the Central Asian kingdoms of those days. The king also built a small town in the vicinity of Srinagar called Alau-ud-dinpura and a palace therein. The Sultan died in the year 1354 leaving two sons, the eldest of whom succeeded the throne under the name of Sultan Shihab-ud-din.

#### SULTAN SHIHAB-UD-DIN (1354-73)

Shihab-ud-din may rightly be called the Lalitaditya of medieval Kashmir. During his time Kashmir armies marched to distant places in India and Afghanistan flying victorious banners and raising the prestige of their arms. It goes to the credit of Shihab-ud-din that he was as good an administrator as he was an accomplished general.

From a cursory glance at the history of this period it is clear that even though Kashmir had been subjected to untold tyrannies and repressions by the invasions of Dulchu and Achala, they had not lost their martial traditions. The spirit of the fighting clans of Damaras and Lavanyas still stood high. An able and efficient leader had, therefore, no difficulty in mustering these warlike elements around him. Shihab-ud-din supplied this focal point admirably well.

His personal character was without a blemish. He did not fritter away his energies in wine and women. He dressed simply and was of active habits. His greatest pleasure lay in conducting his victorious armies to distant lands. It appears that his army was mainly composed of the warlike tribes of Damaras (Dars), Lavanyas (Lon) and hill tribes from Poonch, Rajauri, Kishtwar and Muzaffarabad.

At the beginning of his reign he led an army to the borders of Sind and defeated the Jam on the banks of the Indus. Returning from there he led his armies into Afghanistan and gained a victory over the Afghans at Peshawar. Thence he marched without much opposition to the borders of Hindukush. He had an idea of subduing the kingdoms of Central Asia but changing his mind he instead went to Ladakh and Baltistan which he subjugated. His commander, Candra Damara, reduced Kishtwar and Jammu. During one of his expeditions to the Punjab he established a cantonment on the banks of the Sutlej where he met in 1361 the Raja of Nagarkot (Kangra) who was also returning from a raid on the dominions of Feroz Tughlaq. The Raja shared his spoils with Shihab-ud-din, expecting to receive his support and aid in his further depredations in the Punjab. But he was disappointed in his expectations, Shihab-ud-din refusing to be a party to such inhuman practices. Shihab-ud-din in all his conquering expeditions treated the vanquished people and their chieftains with profound generosity.

Kashmiri historians have recorded Shihab-ud-din's invasion, of Firoz Tughlaq's dominions with 50,000 horse and 50,000 foot soldiers. An indecisive battle between the forces of the Sultans of Delhi and Kashmir is said to have been fought on the banks of the Sutlej. A treaty followed according to which Shihab-ud-din was given a free hand in all the territories from Sirhind to Kashmir. A matrimonial alliance was also concluded with Firoz's two daughters being wedded to Shihab-ud-din and his brother, Qutb-ud-din, while Shihab-ud-din's daughter was married to Firoz Tughlaq. This seems to have been Shihab-ud-din's last campaign. Thenceforth he devoted his attention to the consolidation of his kingdom.



Although Kashmir had been under Muslim kings now for over thirty years, it appears that there was no religious intolerance exhibited on the part of the people or of the kings. Most of Shihab-ud-din's army commanders, ministers and other high officials were Hindus. According to the Chronicler Jonaraja, the commanders under the Sultan were Candra Damara, Laula Damara and Shura, besides Sayyid Hassan and Abdal Raina. He put his confidence in his two Hindu ministers, Kota Bhatta and Udyashri. The former was a descendant of Lalitaditya's minister and received many favours from the Sultan.

The Sultan was a great builder too. With the wealth which he acquired as a result of numerous expeditions to India and Ladakh, he constructed a splendid town named after him as Shihab-ud-dinpura (present Shadipur). During his reign a devastating flood destroyed the greater portion of the city of Srinagar. All the bridges were washed away and the king, in order to prevent such calamities befalling his capital, built a beautiful town near the foot of the Hari Parbat hill and named it after his queen Lakshmi. For his soldiers he constructed regular barracks there.

During his old age he fell into the snares of Lasa the daughter of his queen Lakshmi's sister. This naturally led to great jealousy between the aunt and the niece and the matters came to a head when Lasa, in order to run the queen down, asked the king to banish his two sons, Hassan Khan and Ali Khan. The old queen was thus humbled and though Shihab-ud-din repented later and sent word to them to return to their home, it was already too late, the king dying meanwhile. His younger brother, Hindal, seized the opportunity and ascended the throne under the name of Qutb-ud-din.

Shihab-ud-din's reign lasting for nineteen years may be called one of the glorious periods in the history of the Sultans of Kashmir. He was a patron of learning and opened several schools. He was tolerant towards Hindus and Jonaraja records that once when owing to his foreign campaigns he was hard-up for money, one of his ministers, Udyashri suggested the melting of a brass image of the Buddha for coinage. The Sultan abhorrently replied : "Past generations have set up images to obtain fame and earn merit, and you propose to demolish them ? How great is the enormity of such a deed !"<sup>1</sup>

Shihab-ud-din was loved at home by his subjects and feared abroad. He raised Kashmir and Kashmiris to great eminence and power and established their supremacy in Northern India.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Dutt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 44.

## SULTAN QUTB-UD-DIN (1373-89)

QUTB-UD-DIN retained most of the ministers and officials of his predecessor and showed his generosity in inviting prince Hassan, his brother's son to be his heir-apparent. But soon seeds of discord were sown between them by selfish ministers. Udyashri organised a revolt against the rule of the king and wanted to instal Hassan on the throne. But the conspiracy was soon found out and Udyashri after being captured was executed. The prince fled the country and we hear no more of him in the later narrative of events.

Sultan Qutb-ud-din ruled with a mild hand. He personally attended to the duties of the State and himself led a frugal life. He was a man of culture, a poet and a patron of learning. During his reign Sayyid Ali Hamadani paid his second visit to the country in 1379 and initiated the king into the deeper mysteries of Sufism. Sayyid Ali gave him a cap which the Sultan always wore under his crown. This cap was jealously guarded by the later Sultans too until it was buried along with the body of Fateh Shah in accordance with his will. The king also began to practise austerities and produced some mystic poems under the penname of Qutb.

The Qutbdinpura quarter of Srinagar still retains his name, having been founded by this Sultan. It is situated between the Zaina and the A'li bridges on the left bank of the Vitasta. In the later history of Kashmir it figures prominently as the headquarters of the rebellious sons of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. It is also famous for being the site of the first Muslim residential college which produced eminent scholars.

At the beginning of his reign there was a rising in the Lohara district of Kashmir situated to the west of the Valley. The district was under a Hindu chieftain and when Qutb-ud-din sent Lolaka Damara, his commander-in-chief, to reduce the fort, the chief sent messages through his Brahman emissaries to the effect that he was ready to hand over the fort to him. But elated by his first success Lolaka chastised the Brahman messengers, ultimately killing them. The Lohara chief taking a warning from this and apprehending a worse fate for himself and his Kshatriya followers, decided to fight to the bitter end. Lolaka was killed and his army fled to the interior of Kashmir in great confusion.

Famines were of frequent occurrence during Qutb-ud-din's reign. The severity of the scarcity of food-stuffs was, as always, felt acutely during the months of June and July. During these months the king and his ministers used to perform Yagnyas and distribute cooked food amongst the starving population.

The performance of Yagnyas and the continuance of the Hindu dress, manners and customs among the converts to Islam, shows the tolerant and humanistic teachings of the first preachers of the new faith in the Valley. The Sultan and his Muslim subjects used to visit a temple in Alau-ud-dinpura every morning. In contravention of the Muslim law Qutb-ud-din had wedded two wives who were sisters. No wonder these non-orthodox practices did not appeal to Sayyid Ali Hamadani who exhorted the king to divorce one of his queens and remarry the other one according to the tenets of Islam. He also advised him to change the dress. But though he held the saint in great reverence he did not accept all his advice.

In his old age the king felt unhappy because of having no heir to leave his kingdom to. "At last", says Jonaraja, "there came a Yogi named Brahmanath and through his favour the king obtained a son after some time."<sup>1</sup> There were great festivities at his birth and the boy was named Shingara, later known to history as Sultan Sikandar. The queen gave birth to another son who was named Haibat. While the boys were still young Qutb-ud-din died, leaving the queen and the ministers in great grief. Ultimately through the intervention of Rai Magrey, the prime minister, the elder boy Sikandar was crowned the king of Kashmir.

#### SULTAN SIKANDAR (1389-1413)

Sikandar began his career as king under the guidance and care of his able mother. There were, however, some political outbursts in the country. Rai Magrey, the minister of the late king, enjoyed enormous power and prestige in the country and Sikandar's mother was always in mortal dread of the powerful minister. He had been instrumental in getting Sikandar's brother, Haibat, murdered, apparently to please the king. But when he found that Sikandar was greatly offended and grieved at this treacherous act, he apprehended trouble for himself. Thenceforth his one aim was to establish his own rule in the country. Sikandar cleverly employed this ambitious minister in another direction. The neighbouring territory of Ladakh had already seceded from Tibet and Sikandar thought it to be the best time to subjugate it. He sent Magrey with a strong force to fulfil this aim. Sikandar was playing a double game. Should Magrey get defeated he would be freed from his ambitious rival and should his arms meet with success he would add a large territory to his kingdom.

Rai Magrey conducted the campaign very efficiently and after a

<sup>1</sup> Dutt, *Op. Cit.*, p. 53.



short time considered himself strong enough to declare his independence. This was too much for Sikandar. He mustered a strong army and marched against the rebel. Magrey was captured and put in prison where he ended his life by committing suicide. Sikandar remained for some time in his newly acquired territory and put its administrative machinery on a sound basis.

In 1398 Timur swooped down upon the plains of India carrying fire and sword to the numerous cities and towns that fell in his line of march. After his sack of Delhi, he sent his grandson Rustum and Muatmad Zain-ud-din as envoys to Sikandar who received them well and sent them back accompanied by his envoy Maulana Nur-ud-din with heavy presents for the conqueror. The envoys reached Timur's camp in the neighbourhood of Jammu and there the rapacious officials without informing their master, sent back Nur-ud-din with the word that Timur demanded from Sikandar 30,000 horses and 100,000 gold coins. Sikandar started collecting hurriedly the heavy exactions from his subjects to meet the demands of Timur and was thus prevented from approaching Timur in person. The latter got incensed at this delay, but when he came to know of the heavy demands made on Sikandar by his rapacious officers, he sent word to the Sultan to meet him on the Indus on March 25, 1399, with whatever small present he could afford to make. Sikandar thereupon left Srinagar for the meeting, but on reaching Baramula learnt that Timur had hurriedly left the Indian frontier for Samarqand. He returned to his capital, but sent his son Shahi Khan (later Zain-ul-abidin) along with his presents to Timur's court at Samarqand, where the prince stayed for seven years.<sup>1</sup>

The acquisition of Ladakh and Sikandar's victory in the Punjab raised his prestige very high and his fame travelled far in Central Asia and Persia. He conducted several campaigns to the neighbouring principalities of Jammu, Rajauri and Poonch and after subjugating Gandhara or north western province of India, married the daughter of the chieftain of that place. This lady was destined to become the mother of Sultan Sikandar's illustrious son, Zain-ul-abidin.

The immediate result of these successes was a heavy influx of Sayyid theologians and other learned men into Kashmir from Persia from where they were being driven out, due to political reasons, by the persecutions of Timur. Sikandar treated them well and gave them land and Jagirs to settle on. Sayyid Ali Hamadani's son, Sayyid Muhammad Hamadani, entered Kashmir accompanied by 700 Sayyids. By coming in contact with these orthodox Sunnis, the king was fired with religious

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1 Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 28.

zeal and he resolved to run the State on purely Islamic law and to propagate the faith by force. In this short-sighted policy he was actively assisted by Malik Suha Bhatt (Saif-ud-din), a recent convert to Islam, whom he appointed his prime minister. Suha Bhatt accompanied by soldiers used to visit the famous temples and destroy them. Martand, Vijayeshwari, Sureshwari and other well-known temples of Kashmir were raised to the ground. By his tacit approval of the wicked deeds of his minister, history has held Sikandar equally responsible for these. Brahmans in their thousands were put to the sword and the major portion of the Hindu population of Kashmir migrated to the South.

Although Sikandar does not seem to have been a well-read man, he patronised literary men. To his court were attracted scholars from all parts of Asia, chiefly from Khorasan, Transoxiana and Mesopotamia. He seems to have been, however, a puritan and prohibited gambling, dancing and playing of musical instruments.

In contrast to his propensities for destruction of old temples, Sikandar acquired fame as the builder of numerous mosques and monasteries of the wooden type of architecture. He founded a town after his name (present Nauhatta near Hari Parbat hill) and built the Jama Masjid there. He also built a mosque at Bijbihara, and the grand hospice in Srinagar known as Khanqah-Mualla. Sikandar is perhaps the first Indian king to have abolished the custom of *Sati* among Hindus. He also abolished some taxes and during his early reign revised the land revenue system. Mir Ali Hamadani when apprised of the religious persecutions by the king and his minister, Suha Bhatt, disapproved of these acts and thenceforth Sikandar desisted from such practices. After a reign of 25 years Sikandar breathed his last in 1413 A.D. He is buried in the enclosure outside the mausoleum of his wife below the fourth bridge in Srinagar.

#### SULTAN ALI SHAH (1413-20)

Sikandar was succeeded by his eldest son, Noor Khan, who ruled under the title of Ali Shah. The renegade Brahman, Suha Bhatt, retained his office until his death and the persecution of the Hindus was not relaxed. Most of Ali Shah's reign was spent in intrigues and cross intrigues among his ministers, and being weak and fickle-minded, he looked upon these helplessly. Suha Bhatt however died shortly before Ali Shah's end, when the king appointed his brother Shahi Khan (later known as Zain-ul-abidin) as his minister. By his tolerant deeds he won the confidence of the Hindus. Shortly after, Ali Shah was seized by a desire to retire from the world and to perform the pilgrimage to Mecca.

Shahi Khan pleaded with him not to leave his post of duty, but Ali Shah was adamant. He left the country to the care of Shahi Khan but when he reached Jammu, the chief of that place, his father-in-law, persuaded him to desist from taking such a step which might ultimately cost him his throne. He offered his help and Ali Shah, changing his mind, returned to the Valley at the head of the forces of the Raja of Jammu. Shahi Khan fled the country and took refuge with Jasrath, chief of the turbulent Khokar tribe with whom he had probably established a friendship at Timur's court where both had stayed for a pretty long time.

Ali Shah, not finding himself safe while Shahi Khan was still alive, led an army against the Khokar chief, foolishly exhausting his army by forced marches. When Jasrath learnt of his enemy's condition, he suddenly attacked him in the hills at Thana near the Pir Panjal Pass and overwhelmed his forces. Ali Shah's fate is uncertain. According to one account he escaped but as he is no more heard of, it is more probable that, as stated in some records, he was captured by Jasrath's troops and killed.

Shahi Khan returned victorious to the Valley and ascended the throne in June 1420 A.D. under the title of Zain-ul-abidin. He was not unmindful of his benefactor, Jasrath, whose later successes in the Punjab were due, in part, to the support received from Kashmir.<sup>1</sup>

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1 "The Muslim chronicles refer to constant fight of Jasrath with the ruler of Jammu, and mention that he defeated and killed in battle Raja Bhim of Jammu, who had all along supported the Sultans of Delhi. We are further told that several times Jasrath was defeated and took refuge in the hills—Jonaraja also tells us that Zain-ul-abidin gave shelter to Jasrath when he was hard pressed by the Lord of Delhi."



## CHAPTER TEN

### SULTAN ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN

WITH THE ACCESSION OF ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN to the throne of Kashmir there opened up an era of glory and prosperity for the people of the kingdom. "Possessed of a broad and tolerant outlook", says Pandit Anand Koul, "and dominated with a desire to benefit mankind, he ruled with such equity and justice and did so much to improve the material prosperity of the people that one cannot fail to admire him. His benevolent rule demands special homage inasmuch as he lived at a period when he had no worthy and enlightened contemporary to emulate. In the world around him he could have found little to help him. He was a potentate encouraged to be tyrannical and selfish by tradition and especially by the example of his father, Sikandar. Zain-ul-abidin was deservedly surnamed Bud Shah or Great King. In spite of six centuries having rolled by since he lived, his name is still remembered with genuine reverence and gratitude. Take the name of Bud Shah before a Kashmiri and at once he will with a happy countenance rhyme it with 'Pad Shah'."<sup>1</sup>

Zain-ul-abidin was the favourite son of his father, and it was because of this that he received a good education at home. Fortunately for him and the people of Kashmir, he got an opportunity to travel abroad and learn new arts and crafts at the court of Timur in Samarqand. How he got the opportunity is an interesting story in itself. In 1398 A.D. Timur Lang or Tamerlane, after his conquest of Persia and Turkistan, came to India. Sikandar was then the ruler of Kashmir and when Tamerlane reached Attock, Sikandar wrote to him acknowledging him as his liege-lord. Tamerlane was pleased at this and sent him an elephant and other gifts in token of his accepting Sikandar's allegiance. On receipt of these, Sikandar sent several precious articles as presents to Tamerlane and wrote to him praying for the honour of being permitted to come to his audience to pay homage to him. Tamerlane replied that he should come to meet him at Attock when he would be returning after the conquest of Hindustan. When Tamerlane was returning to Samarqand after his sanguinary and plundering career in Hindustan, Sikandar started from Srinagar with several rare articles which he

I *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 34.

wanted to present to him at Attock. But he had not gone farther than Baramula when news was received that Tamerlane had already proceeded from Attock towards Samargand. Sikandar then returned to Srinagar and sent his second son, Shahi Khan, then a young boy, with the presents to Tamerlane at Samargand. Shahi Khan carried out his father's mission successfully. Tamerlane bestowed much favour upon Shahi Khan but the latter could not obtain permission to return to Kashmir for seven years. During this long period Shahi Khan took the opportunity of interesting himself in the arts and crafts of Samargand which, being the capital of the great conqueror, was at the height of its wealth and glory. When Tamerlane died in 1405 while conducting a vast expedition against China over the mountains of Tartary, Shahi Khan returned to Kashmir.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

Imbued with high ideals of kingship, Zain-ul-abidin set himself to improving the material prosperity of the country by energetic and sustained efforts. As can well be imagined he found great frustration among the people and the whole administrative machinery broken down due to the ill-advised policy of Sikandar and the subsequent war of succession. The first requisite, therefore, was to bring some order out of the chaotic conditions prevailing in the country. For this purpose he encouraged the old class of officials, the Pandits to return to Kashmir giving them every facility and completely guaranteeing them religious and civil liberties.

Jonaraja records that the judges who were till then accustomed to taking bribes from both the plaintiff and the defendant, were severely dealt with and corruption among the public officials was totally rooted out. Similarly crime was ruthlessly put down. All the criminals were apprehended and put behind the bars. Realizing that unemployment and poverty resulted in the commission of crime he saw to it that suitable employment was guaranteed to the erstwhile criminals. He also introduced the system of proper registration of important documents to prevent fraudulent transactions in property. He dispensed justice quickly and intelligently. The Sultan provided his subjects with a code of laws and had them all engraved on copper plates and placed in public markets and halls of justice. He, however, abhorred bloodshed and rarely put to death any offender for a petty crime. It is recorded of him, says Rodgers, that he gave away 400 camel-loads for the repose of the soul of a man whom he had executed because of his guilt of killing his brother. When the Chaks set fire to his magnificent palace of twelve storeys, he drove them back and had their leader flogged to

death, but took his son, Hussain Chak, into favour. This mildness of temper and lenience in punishment did not, however, encourage any crime in the country. This was due to the complete impartiality of Zain-ul-abidin as a judge. "Though the king was kind-hearted", writes Jonaraja, "yet for the sake of his people he would not forgive even his son or minister or a friend if he were guilty."<sup>1</sup> He cites the case of Mir Yahaya who, while drunk, had killed his wife. Although he was a great favourite of the king he was found guilty and executed. Jonaraja also gives an interesting story of how the king dispensed justice intelligently. Once a Brahman, a resident of Kamraj (the lake district) complained to the king that he could not get back his stolen cow which he had, after four years, found accidentally with a man living in the Maraj district. The king summoned the alleged thief to his presence and asked him to reply to the charge of the Brahman. The man replied that the cow belonged to him and was with him from its birth. In order to test the veracity of his statement the king threw some green water-nuts before the cow and its calf. The cow ate them with relish while the calf after a few sniffs turned away its head from them. This clearly proved that the cow while with the Brahman was accustomed to eating water-nuts, a product of the Wular Lake, whereas the calf which had been brought up in the Maraj district was totally unaccustomed to this sort of food. The cow was restored to her lawful owner and the thief was suitably punished.

Previously, due to continued lawlessness and insecurity of life and property, much of the land was left uncultivated by the farmers. Zain-ul-abidin's first great reform was the revision of the land assessment, reducing it to a fourth of the total produce in some places and to a seventh in others. The cultivators were further protected from the exactions of the revenue officers by a law which prohibited the latter from accepting any gifts.

#### MILITARY EXPEDITIONS

Side by side with the establishment of an ordered and humane government, he reorganised the army which had severely suffered in discipline and equipment during the preceding years. When he ascended the throne the army had both the infantry and cavalry divisions. He so organised it as to leave no possibility of rebellion or rising taking place. Moreover his personal treatment of the officers so charmed them that at his bidding they were ready to march with their men right into the jaws of death. He took great advantage of the recently discovered use of gunpowder and ordered many kinds of cannon to be

<sup>1</sup> *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 80.



manufactured in Kashmir. He experimented with new metals and their alloys until he found one which was new and hard. With this a cannon was cast and "at his command", says Srivara, "I composed a few lines in praise of the weapon."

With a formidable army he reconquered the Punjab and Western Tibet. In all his campaigns he acted very kindly and generously to both the people and the chiefs of the newly acquired territories. Besides putting down internecine conspiracies and removing such elements as tended to disturb the tranquility of his realm, the Sultan further proceeded to enter into friendly relations with his immediate neighbours as well as the potentates and rulers of distant lands. He sent ambassadors with adequate presents to the kings of Khorasan, Turkistan, Turkey, Egypt and Delhi. The king of Tibet reciprocated with suitable presents.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF ARTS AND CRAFTS

It is, however, for his encouragement of arts and crafts that Kashmir will, for all times to come, be indebted to Zain-ul-abidin. Mention has been made of his study of these arts in Samarqand. With his accession to the throne he invited competent teachers and craftsmen from there to train his subjects in these arts. Among some of the industries introduced by him may be mentioned carpet, papier mache, silk, and paper-making. Kashmiris with their natural aptitude for things artistic, soon acquired a great mastery in these crafts and began to produce articles in such beautiful designs and varieties that they acquired an unrivalled fame in Asia and Europe, so much so that when, a century after Zain-ul-abidin's death, Mirza Haider of Kashgar brought Kashmir under his virtual rule, he was struck by the industrial and artistic productions of Kashmir. Says he in his famous *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* :

"In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon, such as stone-polishing, stone-cutting, bottle-making, window-cutting, gold beating, etc. In the whole Maver-ul-Nahr (the country beyond the river Oxus, i.e. Khorasan) except in Samarqand and Bukhara, these are nowhere to be met with, while in Kashmir they are even abundant. This is all due to Zain-ul-abidin."<sup>1</sup>

"Zain-ul-abidin", writes Pandit Anand Koul, "turned Kashmir into a smiling garden of industry inculcating in the hearts of the people sane conceptions of labour and life and also implanting in their minds the germs of real progress. He introduced correct

1 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Elias and Ross, p. 434.

measures and weights and made artisans and traders take solemn oaths (which in those halcyon days one could not easily break) not to kill their golden goose by cheating and swindling. He thus promoted commercial morality and integrity and industrial righteousness—qualities which constitute the backbone of a people's credit and reputation. It was through these virtues that the Kashmiris successfully carried on their shawl and other trades worth crores of rupees annually with distant corners of the globe at a period when Kashmir was an isolated country and communications with the outside world were very difficult."<sup>1</sup>

#### MUSIC AND DANCE

Zain-ul-abidin was a great lover of music and other fine arts. He always made generous allowances to musicians. Hearing of the Sultan's generosity and of his love for music, a good many masters in this art flocked to Kashmir from all directions. One such artist was Mulla Udi of Khorasan. He played on Ud to the great delight of the Sultan and his courtiers. Another master was Mulla Jamal who was a great expert in vocal music. Srivara the author of the *Zaina Rajatarangini* was also an accomplished musician and he used to entertain the king often and the latter would always reward him for his fine performances. The Raja of Gwalior hearing of the Sultan's taste for music sent him all the standard books on Indian music, including the *Sangitachudamani*. Gwalior has been the centre of this art and later was proud of its associations with Tan Sen. It was thus indeed due to Zain-ul-abidin that music in Kashmir reached a high pitch of excellence.

The Sultan also reintroduced the art of drama and dancing which had suffered due to the puritanism of Sikandar. Many actors and dancers, both men and women, came to Kashmir at his invitation and the king would hold special festivals for their performances.

Festivals and fairs were held at different places in the Valley, e.g., at Pampur, Bijbihara, Anantnag, Baramula, Nagam, etc., and the king would grace these occasions with his presence. Fireworks and illuminations were also attractions of these fairs.

#### PUBLIC WORKS

Sultan Zain-ul-abidin was a great builder. Remains of his numerous towns, villages, canals and bridges still exist and bear his name. To increase the agricultural production, he constructed several canals noted among which were the *Utpalapur*, *Nandashaila*, *Bijbihara*, *Advin*, *Amburher*, *Manasbal*, *Zainagir*, and the *Shahkul* at Bawan.

<sup>1</sup> *Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 37.

Many of these canals supplied water to the otherwise dry *Karewa* lands. During the past fifty years many of them have been repaired and reconstructed and put to use. "The long and peaceful reign of Zain-ul-abidin", says Stein, "was productive of important irrigation works. Jonaraja's and Srivara's chronicles give a considerable list of canals constructed under the Sultan," Jonaraja mentions that one of his engineers, Damara Kach, paved a road with stones and thus made it fit for use even during the rainy season. Similarly he built the first wooden bridge in Kashmir still known by the name of Zainakadal (Zain-ul-abidin's bridge).

#### MEDIEVAL WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

The Sultan introduced and encouraged wooden architecture and built numerous beautiful and artistic buildings throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir. Mirza Haider mentions in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* that the palace *Rajdan* was a unique building in the East. It was twelve storeys high and contained numerous rooms, halls, verandahs and staircases. It was decorated with exquisite carvings and frescoe paintings. He had constructed another palatial building, the *Zain Dab* in Zainagiri which the Chaks burned down. In all villages and towns he built rest houses for himself and travellers so that his subjects might not be put to trouble during his frequent visits thereto.

Lawrence says that Zain-ul-abidin planted gardens wherever he went, four of his well-known gardens being Baghi Zainagiri, Baghi Zaina Dab, Baghi Zainapur and Baghi Zainakut. It is however difficult to trace them now. The lay-out and design of these gardens seem to have been of the purely Kashmiri type improved upon by the influence from Samarqand and Bukhara.

#### ENCOURAGEMENT OF LEARNING

Zain-ul-abidin's love for letters is well known in Kashmir. He realized that learning, for which Kashmir was noted from the earliest times, needed to be encouraged so that the land of Sarada might again shine forth as the fountain of knowledge and learning. For this purpose he established numerous schools, colleges and a residential university. His interest in the intellectual growth and development of his subjects was keen and unflagging and he extended his patronage to scholars in as unstinted a measure as he did to artisans and craftsmen. Hence the great influx into Kashmir of scholars and men of letters from other lands. Many Kashmiri Pandits well-versed in Sanskrit adorned his court. Among these may be mentioned Soma Pandit who held a high post in the Translation Bureau and wrote an



account of Zain-ul-abidin's life in his book, *Zaina Charit*.

Bodhi Bhatt, another eminent scholar, translated several Sanskrit works into Persian. Jonaraja and Srivara the famous authors of the later *Rajatarangini* were patronized by the king. Among the Persian and Arabic scholars may be mentioned the names of Maulana Kabir, Mulla Hafiz Baghdadi, Mulla Jamal-ud-din and Qazi Mir Ali.

It is evident that all these literary activities with all their incidental expenses could not have continued and acquired the volume they did unless the king himself were a scholar, "well versed in the literature of his age", and thoroughly conversant with a number of languages. His activities in the domain of literature and scholarship were not confined to translation of books. He spent huge sums in collecting a library which could favourably compare with the one collected by the Samanids. The library remained intact for one hundred years after his death when it was destroyed. As a result of the king's encouragement, education was imparted to high and low. Writes Srivara :

"Even women, cooks and porters were poets ; and the books composed by them exist to this day in every house. If the king be a sea of learning and partial to merit, the people too become so. The meritorious king Zain-ul-abidin for the purpose of earning merit built extensive lodging houses for students and the voices of students studying logic and grammar arose from these houses. The king helped the students by providing teachers, books, houses, food and money and he extended the limits of learning in all branches...Even the families which never dreamt of learning produced men who through the favour of the king, became known for their erudition.....There was not a branch of learning of arts or literature or fine arts which were not studied."<sup>1</sup>

Nor did the king neglect other social welfare activities. Under him flourished many celebrated *vaids* and *hakims* who looked after the health of the people. Shri Bhatt who once cured the king of a severe illness became his trusted counsellor. Similarly Karpura Bhatt the famous physician of his time was patronized by the king. Many famous *hakims* from Central Asia and India came to his court and the king opened dispensaries in various parts of the kingdom where free medicines were supplied to the patients.

There were other charitable institutions which the king maintained. Jonaraja records that in various towns food was distributed free

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1 *Ibid.*, pp. 144-45.

to the poor and infirm. At special festivals which were frequently held, feeding of the poor was a regular feature. "The king caused rest houses for travellers to be built at the outskirts of villages and they were supported by the villagers ; he caused shelters to be built in the forests."

#### RELIGIOUS TOLERATION

It is, however, for his high sense of toleration that Zain-ul-abidin will always be known in history. Living in an age when religious persecutions were the order of the day, his reign shines out as a bright gem amidst the narrow-minded and short-sighted rulers of his time. He made Kashmir the real paradise in which men of all religions and nationalities mingled together and shared one another's joys and sorrows. In return for his patronage and love the Hindus vied with the Muslims in turning their homeland into a smiling garden of peace and prosperity.

Sikandar's unstatesmanlike policy had left many a deep wound behind. As mentioned, a majority of Hindus had left Kashmir taking with them valuable books both religious and secular. Zain-ul-abidin had already as heir-apparent and prime minister of his brother, made himself popular with the Hindus who looked upon him as their best protector during the dark period of religious bigotry. When, therefore, he ascended the throne, confidence returned to them and as soon as he sent messengers to India inviting them back to their birthplace, they responded with great alacrity and pleasure. He enacted certain laws which vouchsafed to them a just administration and trial of their cases according to their own laws and customs. The odious persecutory measures instituted by Sikandar and Suha Bhatt, were revoked, and a general toleration of all religions was proclaimed. Many of the temples which had been demolished in the preceding reign were rebuilt and permission was granted to erect new temples. Jonaraja and Srivara mention that the king built two temples near Ishabar and granted rent-free lands to maintain them. The king remitted the poll tax and granted Jagirs to deserving Hindus. He penalised the killing of cows and himself abstained from eating meat during the holy festivals of the Hindus. The king forbade the killing of birds and fish in several *Nagas* (springs) sacred to the Hindus. The *Rajatarangini* gives a detailed account of how the king took part in the annual Nagayatra festival, when he would don the robes of a Hindu mendicant and perform the pilgrimage in company with other pilgrims. On the way he fed thousands of ascetics and Brahmans. To expiate for the wrongs done to the Hindus by his father he built numerous homes for the widows of

the Brahmans killed in the preceding reigns.

Zain-ul-abidin was much impressed with the Hindu *Sastras* and got many including the *Mahabharata*, translated into Persian for his close study. Srivara mentions that the king studied these scriptures assiduously and was fond of holding discussions on them.

He installed many learned and experienced Hindus on high posts of trust and honour. Shri Bhatt, Tilakacharya, Shiva Bhatt, Simha Bhatt, Karpura Bhatt, Rupya Bhatt, Bodhi Bhatt and Shri Ramanand were some of the famous intellectuals and administrators who rose to power under him. The administration was completely run by the Kashmiri Pandits who at his bidding studied Persian, the new court language.

Zain-ul-abidin led a saintly life. He did not take any money from the State treasury for his personal use, but contented himself with the earnings from a copper mine near Aishmuqam. He had only one wife in contrast to the prevailing custom among Eastern potentates of having a large seraglio. He abstained from the use of liquors and during Ramzan would not even take meat. In his private life he wore a simple dress ; although his regal robes became famous throughout Northern India and Central Asia for their fine and costly material. He was a highly religious man, extending equal respect to all the great religions of the world. He venerated holy saints and faqirs. "The king", says Jonaraja, "took his instructions about religious penances and about pleasures of life both from superior and inferior hermits and gave them ear-pendants, vessels of gold, and clothes."<sup>1</sup>

#### FLOOD AND FAMINE

Towards the end of his reign a severe famine occurred in Kashmir. The contemporary historian, Srivara, gives harrowing tales of the sufferings of the people. The immediate cause of the famine was an early fall of snow which completely destroyed the ripe paddy crop. As ill-luck would have it the succeeding winter was also a severe one. The price of rice shot up enormously. Gold lost its value in comparison with paddy. "A hungry man", records the Chronicler, "distressed with the thought of what he should eat entered a house at night, and discarding gold and other riches, stole rice from a pot. ....Feeble, emaciated men in villages longed to obtain rice. A large number of people died. Famine-stricken people ate leaves, roots and even twigs of trees. Formerly one *Khari* of paddy could be had for three hundred *dinaras* but owing to the famine the same *Khari* of paddy could not be

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p, 90.



obtained even for 1500.”<sup>1</sup>

The king exerted every muscle to alleviate the sufferings of the people. He gave out paddy from his and government stores free to the hungry people. Fortunately the following year's crop was a bumper one which quickly relieved the distress of the people. After normal conditions were restored the black marketers and hoarders who had swindled the people by selling foodstuffs at abnormal rates were brought to book and made to return the excess of the prices charged by them. He also, by a royal decree, cancelled all the debts incurred by needy people in their hour of distress when unscrupulous money-lenders and *baniyas* had taken undue advantage of the sufferings of the people.

Another calamity afflicted the people two years after the famine in the shape of a devastating flood. Heavy rains fell incessantly for a number of days resulting in the melting of snow on mountain tops. The various tributaries of the Vitasta swelled and washed down numerous trees, houses, cattle and human beings. Particularly destructive was the swollen Vishav. The city of Srinagar situated as it was towards a low lying locality was the worst sufferer. Houses were destroyed and people ran for safety to the hill-tops of Sankaracarya and Hari Parbat. Apprehending similar occurrences in future the king seriously thought of shifting his capital city towards the high land round about the Hari Parbat hill. He thus founded his new city which is to this day known as Naushahar. The new town was laid out on a well-devised plan with broad roads and streets all paved with stones. The houses built therein were of a better type and more cleanly. Formerly the waters of the Dal Lake joined the river through the middle of the old city but the king got a new canal, the Mar, dug which connected the Dal with the Anchar Lake direct. The Mar canal was crossed by artistically built stone bridges some of which are extant even to this day. The canal was lined with dressed stones and houses of rich officials and traders rose up on its banks.

#### FRATRICIDAL WAR AMONG HIS SONS

Early in his reign Zain-ul-abidin associated with himself in the government and even designated as his heir, his younger brother Muhammad but the latter predeceased him, and though the king admitted his son Haider Khan to the confidential position which his father had held, the birth of three sons of his own excluded his nephew from succession. But unfortunately these sons proved a great disappointment. It was in his own life that Zain-ul-abidin saw the signs of decay

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, 118-19.

of all that he had assiduously built up. His sons, Adam Khan, Haji Khan and Behram Khan, were of vicious character and though their father tried his best to reconcile them with one another, they continued the internecine warfare resulting in the weakening of the kingdom and distress of the people.

Zain-ul-abidin had sent his eldest son, Adam Khan, to recover Baltistan and Haji Khan, the second son, the fort and district of Loharkot, both of which provinces had revolted. Adam Khan returned first to the capital and flushed with his victory wanted to measure his strength with his brother and father. A similar feeling took hold of Haji Khan and he arrayed his forces opposite that of his brother and father. But he was defeated and fled to Bhimber. Zain-ul-abidin appointed Adam Khan, to administer the Kamraj district but his treatment towards the people was abominable. In bold contrast to the just and efficient administration of his father, he "plundered the people of their riches by threat, craft or by deceiving them with false hopes and in some places by force. His servants oppressed timid women and cruelly treated the villagers and took care to avoid courts of justice."<sup>1</sup> He was a profligate taking special pleasure in drinking in public.

Seeing these depredations of his son, Zain-ul-abidin was much distressed and sent a rebuke to him. This incensed him and he raised the banner of revolt and established his forces in Sopore which he captured. Zain-ul-abidin went to meet him and at the same time called his second son, Haji Khan, from exile. Adam Khan on hearing of his brother's arrival at Baramula, fled towards Gilgit and Zain-ul-abidin returned to Srinagar with his son, Haji Khan, when the latter atoned by faithful service for past disobedience and was rewarded by being designated heir to the throne.

As the old king became more sickly the internecine warfare among them took an acuter form and towards the end of his life major skirmishes were of frequent occurrence. Futile were his exhortations to unity, vain his fables of the bundle of arrows and of the snake with many heads, which he related to his sons. Ultimately Adam Khan who was hated by the people was given a crushing defeat and he had to flee, leaving the country and the throne safe for Haji Khan on Zain-ul-abidin's death in 1470 A.D.

Long was his death lamented and even up to this day the people take his name with reverence and gratitude as a word of good omen. No tribute can repay the debt Kashmir owes to him for ever. The poet chronicled the year of his demise in this feelingly rendered

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 126.

Persian stanza :

*Sultan Zain-ul-abidin khima dar khulde-barin  
Be nur shud taj o nagin be nur shud arzo sama  
Az bahri tarikhash 'ayan be sar shudah ander jahan  
'adlo karam, 'ilm o' alam jah o hasham sulh o safa.*

Sultan Zain-ul-abidin went to dwell in heaven  
The crown and the seal became lustreless, the earth and the sky  
became gloomy ;  
From that date evidently headless became in the world ;  
Justice and generosity ; learning and power ; glory and pomp ;  
peace and tolerance.

With the death of Zain-ul-abidin the power of the royal line founded by Shah Mir began to vane, though it took some more time before the rule of this dynasty came to a virtual close. The later kings of this line were mere puppets in the hands of rival but powerful clans headed by various chiefs. Their fortunes closely followed the latters' rise to, or fall from power.



## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### CIVIL WAR AND POLITICAL UNREST

THE SMOULDERING EMBERS of rivalry among the three sons of Zain-ul-abidin burst into a fire on the approaching death of their father. As already mentioned Zain-ul-abidin's closing years were embittered by the behaviour of his sons towards him and towards one another. He had tried his best to forge bonds of unity among them, but he did not meet with success.

To ensure the continuation of his lineage and a peaceful succession to the throne, he first nominated Haji, his second son, as his heir-apparent and when this led to trouble, he revoked his decision, nominating Adam, the eldest, in his place. But Adam's treatment of the people as governor of Kamraj and his degenerated moral character, made him change his decision again. He then bestowed favours on his youngest son, Behram, whom he wanted to declare his successor. But the latter had come under the influence of Haji, whose company he would not give up even for the honours that the king wished to confer on him. Exasperated, the old Sultan left the decision of succession to the strength of arms of his sons after his death.

But the wicked brothers did not wait for him to die peacefully. While the noble Sultan, frustrated and grief-stricken, lay on his death-bed,—his trusted councillors and beloved wife<sup>1</sup> having predeceased him—Behram advised Haji to proceed to the palace, imprison the ministers hostile to his cause and seize the horses and the treasure. But Haji desisted from embarking on such a course. Adam on his part moved with his followers to the capital, passing the night on its outskirts. Meanwhile Hassan Kache a powerful noble and king's treasurer, took the oath of allegiance to Haji and handed over the treasury to him. This unnerved Adam, and realising that his cause was lost, he fled. Haji's son, Prince Hassan, who was

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1 Her name according to Srivara was Vodha Khatona (Chief Queen), but later historians call her Taj Khatun. She was the daughter of Sayyid Muhammad Baihaqi and gave birth to two daughters. She had no son and the Sultan married a second wife, the daughter of the ruler of Jammu. She was the mother of his four sons, Adam, Haji, Jasrat and Behram. Jasrat probably died in young age, as we find no mention of his name later.

governor of Poonch, came post-haste to the help of his father, whose position was thus strengthened further.

### SULTAN HAIDER SHAH (1470-72)

And when the great Sultan Zain-ul-abidin breathed his last on Friday the 12th May, 1470, Haji Khan ascended the throne under the name of Haider Shah.

No sooner had, however, the spectacular ceremonies of his coronation ended, than Adam Khan, who was in Jammu, planned an attack on the Valley. He was encouraged in his design by the unpopularity of Haider who gave himself up to the pleasures of wine and women, permitting the affairs of the State to be attended to by unscrupulous ministers and advisers. His chief counsellor was one Purna, a barber, who instigated him to put to death the powerful noble, Hassan Kache, with whose help and influence he had acquired the throne.

Hassan Kache's murder and ruthless persecution of Adam's sympathisers in Kashmir, discouraged the latter to launch an attack on Haider's forces. He repaired to the court of Manik Dev, the ruler of Jammu, his maternal uncle, where he met his end in an encounter between the Jammu forces and the Turks. Haider, when he heard the sad news, lamented loudly and had his body brought from Jammu and interred beside the grave of his mother.

Thoroughly conversant with Hindu and Muslim scriptures and a patron of art and literature, Haider Shah was generous and tolerant by nature. But he was ruthless to his enemies and would never forgive an injury to himself. Through the intrigues and evil counsels of his favourite, Purna, he adopted a policy of persecution of his Hindu subjects, some of whom, on the instigation of Purna himself, were responsible for damaging the Sayyid Khanqah. "He spent most of his time in wine cups and in the society of women and musicians."<sup>1</sup>

This resulted in his neglect of the administration of the kingdom and the territories which were tributary to Kashmir, declared themselves free. With a view to arresting the dwindling power of Kashmir, Haider sent his son, Prince Hassan, at the head of an armed force, to bring the rebellious chiefs to their knees. The campaign proved successful and when the prince returned to Kashmir after an absence of six months, he had already reduced to submission the Raja of Rajapuri (Rajauri) who gave him his daughter in marriage. Similarly the chief of Madra and of the Khokhars reacknowledged Kashmir ruler's suzerainty.

1 Hassan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 99.

But meanwhile the political atmosphere in the capital had turned hostile to the Prince. Behram, taking advantage of the king's failing health and indolent habits, had acquired ascendancy at the court. But soon Hassan who had endeared himself to the army, won the support of Ahmad Aswad, a popular and influential noble, who headed the movement for the replacement of the incompetent king by some able and energetic man capable of restoring peace and plenty to the harassed land.

Haider Shah, however, did not live long. During one of his drinking carouses held in his glass-room on the top storey of his palace, he fell down and bled profusely from the nose. Already weakened by gout and other ailments, he immediately lost consciousness, which he was never destined to regain.

Ahmad Aswad approached Behram to proclaim himself the king and appoint Hassan as his heir-apparent. This, he thought, was the best arrangement to secure peace and good government to the land. But Behram did not agree to the nomination of Hassan as the heir-apparent. Thereupon Ahmad, with the consent of other nobles and ministers, proclaimed Hassan as king, and made preparations to attack Behram, who was alarmed and behaving in a cowardly manner fled the city.

Haider Shah died on April 13, 1472 after a reign of one year and ten months and was buried near the grave of his father. Hassan Shah signalled his accession by conferring the title of Malik on Ahmad Aswad and appointing him as his Wazir. His son, Nauroz, was appointed the Lord of Marches and Jehangir Magrey, another powerful noble, was entrusted with the chief command of the army.

#### SULTAN HASSAN SHAH (1472-84)

Hassan Shah in his youth was a man of pluck and adventure, but on ascending the throne he did not display any outstanding merit for the job and entrusted the care of his kingdom to Malik Ahmad who had already acquired a great influence over him.

Soon after Hassan Shah's accession to the throne, Behram, his uncle, who had fled to the Punjab, invaded the kingdom at the invitation of some nobles. When he arrived in Kamraj, the Sultan proceeded to Sopore, chief town of the district. He sent his trusted commander, Tazi Bhatt, against the pretender who, being let down by his supporters in the king's camp, received a crushing defeat and fled to Zainagir, a nearby Pargana. He was, however, pursued and captured. Hassan Shah had him shackled and blinded and he died a miserable death three years later.



At this time Malik Ahmad was all-powerful at his court. Two nobles, Abhimanyu and Malik Zada who had risen high in the Sultan's favour, were removed and disgraced by the machinations of Malik Ahmad. Abhimanyu had supported the cause of Hassan's father, Haider Shah, during the lifetime of Zain-ul-abidin and hence both Haider and Hassan reposed great trust in him. But becoming ambitious, he plotted to overthrow Malik Ahmad, the Wazir, who countered the intrigue and denounced him before the king. He was blinded and thrown into prison, where he died after two years. Similar was the fate of Malik Zada who along with his friend Purna was thrown into prison. Their illgotten wealth was confiscated by the Sultan.

During the early days of his rule, Hassan Shah endeavoured to revive the practices and edicts of Zain-ul-abidin. He himself was a well read man and patronised a good number of Sanskrit and Persian scholars. Many Sanskrit books were got translated into Persian and the Sultan acquired a great proficiency in religious and literary books of the Hindus. Says the Chronicler—"The king learnt the six schools of philosophy and the different works of these six schools became one in him."

The Sultan was a great builder too. It was he who rebuilt the Shah Hamadan mosque and the Jama Masjid in Srinagar which originally built by Sikandar, had been destroyed in a fire in 1479 A. D. He built a *Khanaqah* or hospice at Didmar in Srinagar, and his nobles, particularly Malik Ahmad built several religious edifices. Hindus and Buddhists too repaired their temples and *Viharas* and built new ones.

But the rot had already gone deep enough. Hassan Shah's good and benevolent nature was offset by his personal shortcomings. An addict to liquor and given to the worst type of debauchery—his court had 1200 Hindustani musicians and an equally large number of concubines—he was perhaps the last of the line of Shah Mir who could be called to have maintained assemblance of kingly power. His reign of twelve years witnessed the struggle for ascendancy between the Sayyids and local nobles, the latter commanding the support of the people of Kashmir.

#### SAYYID DOMINATION

With the solid foundation of Islam having been laid in Northern India, a stream of Muslim Sayyids from Central Asia and Persia flowed into the Punjab and Kashmir during and after Timur's invasion. They settled in colonies and coming as they did from the line of the Prophet, they were treated with great respect by the Muslim kings and their Muslim subjects. By and by they acquired an ascendancy over other

classes and grew so much in power and influence that in 1414 Khizr Khan a leader of the Sayyids attacked and captured the kingdom of Delhi, thus founding the Sayyid dynasty, whose rule lasted till 1450. The last ruler of this dynasty Sayyid Alau-ud-din being incompetent, abdicated voluntarily in favour of the governor of the Punjab, Bahlol Lodi.

Kashmir during the period following the death of Zain-ul-abidin came under the political domination of the Sayyids whose ancestors had originally come in large numbers to Kashmir during his as well as his father's (Sikandar's) rule and had settled there. Sayyid Nasir and his kith who were direct descendants of the Prophet were greatly respected by Zain-ul-abidin. Nasir was a man of great accomplishments and the king gave his daughter in marriage to him.

The Sayyids were given high positions and were shown great favours, being granted estates to rule over. Contracting marriages in the royal and other noble families, the Sayyids acquired huge fortunes and lived a life of luxury.

But to the common people they proved a source of misery and oppression. Says Srivara : "These foreigners had become rich after coming to this country and had forgotten their previous history, even as men forget previous life on coming out of the womb. They oppressed the people." Gradually the Sayyids accumulated all political power in their hands and appointed their own men on all important public posts. It seemed then that within a short time the Kashmiris would be relegated to the position of hewers of wood and drawers of water.

But the people could not take it lying down. They found an efficient and energetic leader in the person of Malik Tazi Bhatt.

#### TAZI BHATT

Very little is known about his early history except that he came of a very poor family of Kashmir. Born during the early years of Zain-ul-abidin's reign his days of boyhood passed in great penury and he could not afford even to go to school and used to wander about the city in tattered clothes. But what he lacked in education was fully compensated by his active and martial habits. He received instruction in archery and other arts of war from various soldiers of fortune with whom Kashmir abounded then. But with all his interest in these warlike activities he could not make appreciable progress in his material well-being.

His rise to power is ascribed to chance. One day king Zain-ul-abidin had arranged an archery contest and offered a handsome prize

as well as a position of rank to the man who would hit the mark from a certain distance. Many were the best archers of the land who attempted to carry away the prize but failed. Ultimately Tazi Bhatt who was one of the spectators witnessing the contest, rose up and begged permission of the king to try his hand. To humiliate his best generals, the king gave assent and amid the jeerings and shoutings of the army, Tazi Bhatt in his miserable clothes but with a confident gait, came into the ring. He raised the bow and apparently in a careless manner let go an arrow and lo ! it accurately hit the mark. Great was the jubilation among the people who triumphantly carried him to the presence of the king. The prize was awarded to poor Tazi Bhatt and with it the days of his poverty ended. Hence the Kashmiri proverb :

*Greh yeli asi kasun Shahas*

*Teli ho mali sapdi Tazi Bhatt kan.*

Should God will to remove the evil of your stars,

Good luck will fall on you as it did on Tazi Bhatt by his arrow shot.

Tazi Bhatt though in his teens rose rapidly as a military and popular leader. Seeing his abilities and the favours shown to him by the king, Malik Ahmad, the ambitious minister, adopted him as his own son. Tazi Bhatt was assigned to the service of Prince Hassan who later ascended the throne on the death of his father, Haider Shah. Tazi Bhatt served Prince Hassan faithfully particularly when "he was in the foreign country," leading a campaign to reduce the rebellious chiefs of the hill regions on the outskirts of the Valley.

During Hassan Shah's reign, the Sayyids, under their leader Jamal, became turbulent and the popular resentment against them rose to a high pitch. Tazi Bhatt heading the popular agitation demanded their externment and the confiscation of their estates. Hassan Shah fearing an open revolt acceded to these demands and many of the Sayyids were turned out of the Valley. Some of them went to Delhi where their kinsmen were still in great power. Most of them, however, took shelter under the petty chieftains on the borders of Kashmir.

This act of the king relieved the poor Kashmiris of an irksome domination and the stock of Tazi Bhatt's popularity rose very high. His adopted father at this time arranged a marriage between him and the daughter of Jehangir Magrey, an important noble and the commander of the royal forces. This lady had been previously married to a Sayyid but Jehangir finding that she was ill-treated by her husband got her divorced. This relation greatly strengthened the political position of Tazi Bhatt.



Malik Ahmad, with the help of his adopted son and Jehangir Magrey, set himself to the task of improving the condition of the people who had been oppressed by the haughty Sayyids and their minions. "When the country was rid of these thorns", says the Chronicler, "people were happy under the good administration, and they occupied themselves in marriages and festivities, in building good houses, in dancing and processions and they thought of nothing else."

But unfortunately Kashmiris were not destined to lead a life of peace and plenty for long. Soon the relations between Malik Ahmad and Tazi Bhatt were embittered through the machinations of Tazi's step-brother, Nauroz, Malik Ahmad's son. Nauroz unable to brook the prosperity of Tazi, privately accused him before his father. Records Srivara :

"He told him that among all the ministers, Tazi had monopolised the power to confer favours or award punishments to men ; that he was haughty on account of the support he received from the people. He also alleged that the guardianship of the prince had also been given to him and that these circumstances had concurred for the ruin of their family. He also said that Tazi was the commander-in-chief of the forces and that if he were not destroyed, he would soon oppose them. When his son said these things, Malik Ahmad regarded him with jealousy and was angry with him, though he had been adopted as his son."

But it was not easy even for the chief minister to dislodge Tazi Bhatt. Malik Ahmad had, therefore, to take recourse to a stratagem by which he hoped to get rid of him.

#### EXPEDITION AGAINST TATAR KHAN

At about this time Tatar Khan, Bahlol Lodi's governor had established his oligarchy over the people of Northern Punjab, with Sialkot as his headquarters. The Dogras were galling under his yoke and were on the lookout for an opportunity to destroy his power. They had heard with delight the news of the discomfiture and the externment of the Sayyids by the Kashmiris under the leadership of Tazi Bhatt. Repeatedly they applied to the Kashmiris for aid against the forces of their oppressor, Tatar Khan Lodi.

Malik Ahmad in the open court volunteered to lead an expedition in support of their Jammu neighbours and asked the king to allow him to equip an army for this purpose. This was only a ruse, for he well knew that Tazi Bhatt who was eager to undertake some bold adventure, would necessarily take upon himself this risky job. Malik

Ahmad's calculations proved correct, for no sooner had he requested the king to allow him to lead the expedition than Tazi volunteered to march out at the head of the army. The king hearing this request and on the advice of Malik Ahmad furnished Tazi Bhatt with an army and sent him out of Kashmir. Tazi's servants followed him with "great din and noise, in fear and in gladness, even as black bees follow their chief."

Malik Ahmad breathed a sigh of relief, for he was certain that Tazi and his army would be utterly defeated and destroyed. But Fate decreed otherwise. Tazi was hailed as a deliverer and a friend by the people of Jammu. "When the king of Rajpuri (modern Rajauri) and the men of Madra country (modern Jammu) saw the costly and well-equipped army, adorned with royal insignia, they wondered. The people of Madra, of small stature, were pleased at the approach of Tazi, they became unruly, left their ruler Tatar Khan and came to him, thus causing a division of Tatar's army."

Tazi Bhatt, though born of poor parents showed his worth as a general and a loyal servant throughout the conduct of this campaign. "He reduced many chiefs to vassalage, and performed many deeds of courage and severity and thereby inspired terror in the celebrated kings of Delhi and other places." With the help of the Jammu army, Tazi marched on Sialkot and plundered it.

Malik Ahmad and his son Nauroz were now smitten with jealousy of and hatred towards Tazi. They had already induced the fickle-minded king to entrust the guardianship of the prince to Nauroz. When Tazi heard of this disregard of the king's obligation towards him, he felt chagrined, more so, when on his arrival from his victorious campaign the king did not accord him due honours. But he had already captured the people's imagination and his countrymen regarded him as a hero. He was feted and cheered by the populace. The king and his chief minister were now in mortal fear of this people's idol. Rarely did the king sleep in the same room consecutively for two nights for fear of being assassinated.

#### SAYYIDS RECALLED

Being unable to do any injury to Tazi, Malik Ahmad planned to bring back his mortal enemies, the Sayyids. In this he was actively assisted by the queen who was the daughter of a Sayyid. Malik Ahmad despatched encouraging letters to them. They were quick to seize this opportunity of reimposing their hold on Kashmir. "They collected their party and came in like swans."

Great was the indignation of the people at this unpatriotic and foolish step taken by the king on the advice of the queen and the Malik. Firoz Damara, a leading public figure appealed to the Malik to desist from this. In vain did he recount before him the evil consequences of this foolish act of his. In vain did he point out that Tazi Bhatt for whose ruin he had resorted to this suicidal plan was actually under his power and was conducting himself like his servant ; that he should therefore protect and subdue his pride by means of good advice. In vain did he warn him that though he was bringing back the Sayyids to destroy one man yet when they came all would be destroyed. Malik Ahmad consoled himself with the thought that the Sayyids after having once felt his power would behave in future and would "now become his flatterers."

But in this he was mistaken. As soon as the Sayyids took possession of their former estates, they seized the first opportunity to take revenge upon the people and their leaders. Too late did Malik Ahmad and his son, Nauroz, realize that their jealousy towards Tazi had landed Kashmir in trouble.

The Sayyids now attempted to take their revenge upon Tazi Bhatt. They planned to get him imprisoned and to abduct his wife. Tazi was informed beforehand by his faithful followers of this conspiracy and he went to take shelter in the house of his adopted father, Malik Ahmad, who had by now been reconciled to him. This was quickly misrepresented to the king as an attempt by the Malik and Tazi to form an alliance against him. The king sent his police chief to arrest Tazi. At once the wrath of the people took a violent form. The police party was attacked. The king fearing an open revolt pacified the people by announcing that he was only protecting Tazi against the machinations of the Sayyids and had therefore ordered the police to guard his house. By this clever stratagem the Sayyids practically shut Tazi Bhatt in his house but he was allowed to draw a sumptuous allowance and pass his days among his family and relations.

#### FALL OF MALIK AHMAD

Having put Tazi Bhatt out of their way, the Sayyids now planned to get rid of Malik Ahmad. One day during a drinking bout Ahmad's son, Nauroz, passed some undignified remarks against the king. This was used as a handle to ruin him and his family. Knowing that Jehangir Magrey had since the time of the recall of Sayyids, never forgiven Ahmad and that he was on the lookout for an opportunity to destroy him, the king timed a meeting between him and the Malik in the courtyard of the palace. Facing each other they could not suppress



their anger. Jehangir at once challenged his opponent who, drawing his sword, delivered a strong blow which Jehangir narrowly missed. A commotion was raised in the palace and the followers of both the leaders rushed to the scene of the melee. Seizing this opportune moment the people overpowered the police guard at Tazi's house and released him. Mounted on his swift horse and followed by a huge concourse of the disgruntled and oppressed citizen, Tazi reached the palace courtyard in time to turn the scale against Malik Ahmad and his son. The inflamed people set fire to the palace and in a short time the whole locality became an infernal furnace. Malik Ahmad retreated in disgrace. His son was killed and his followers soon deserted him. Immediately the king under the advice of the Sayyids got him imprisoned. All his wealth which he had amassed during the long tenure of his office as prime minister was confiscated. "Ahmad died in prison and the field was now clear for the Sayyids to assert their power in full.

"They became unruly after this triumph, they placed the king under their control and regarded the people of Kashmir scarcely even as grass." The administration fell into unsympathetic and incompetent hands and the only concern of these haughty people was to amass wealth at the cost of the poor peasantry. "Accepting bribes," bemoaned the Chronicler, "was considered by the officers of the State as a virtue, oppressing the subjects was regarded as wisdom and the addiction to wine and women was reckoned as happiness." The people could not however tolerate this state of affairs for long. "It was apparent that some revolution was at hand, and this was brought nearer by the insatiating lust for power which the foreigners displayed."<sup>1</sup>

#### INVASION OF LADAKH

Having completely ruined the economy of the Valley, the Sayyids planned to extend their power to the frontier districts of Ladakh and Baltistan. They sent a strong army under the command of Sayyid Hassan and Jehangir Magrey. The latter advised the Sayyid to launch the attack from two directions—the Burzil and the Zoji passes—in order to create a diversion in the enemy forces. But the hot-headed Sayyid did not listen to this sane advice of the experienced and able Kashmiri general. The result was that after crossing the Zojila the Sayyid's army was surrounded by the Bhauttas "who fell on the rear of the army and destroyed the soldiers." Most of the commanders of the king fell in that war and very few soldiers reached Kashmir to tell their sorrowful tale. Hearing of this discomfiture and defeat of their oppressors, the Kashmiri masses became elated and soon a strong

1 *Ibid.*, p. 252.

popular resistance force was organized. Jehangir Magrey advised the king to suppress the rising power of the Sayyids in order to win back the loyalty of the people. But the king would not listen. Magrey, however, would not be a party to bad government. "I am going away for the safety of your kingdom as well as of myself. The country is ruined and you ought to save yourself somehow," was his last counsel to the king.

The simmering discontent began to show itself in several small affrays between the Kashmiris and the Sayyids. Suspecting Jehangir Magrey to be a leader of the popular unrest, the Sayyids plotted to get him assassinated, but Jehangir got news of this plot in time and with his troops and near relations went away by "inaccessible roads to Loharkot, a strong fortress on the borders of Poonch."

#### POPULAR REVOLT SUPPRESSED

From there he established contacts with the disgruntled Kashmiris and awaited developments. The king now became a puppet in the hands of the Sayyids. "He lost all interest in the administration of the country and remained indifferent to the doings of his servants. His mind was influenced by his wife and the Sayyids, and his own acts became disorderly and reprehensible. Unable to enforce his orders he disliked ability in others and lived only to watch the looks of beloved women. These women were quick in inflicting punishments and bestowed favours on men, and were eager in accepting bribes, and they, not the ministers or the servants, became the intimate friends of the king."

Under such chaotic conditions the plight of the common man can well be imagined than described. The oppressed naturally sought the only remedy open to a brave but down-trodden people. They rose as one against the king and his foreign advisers, choosing the opportune winter months when the movements of the army would be hampered by deep snow and frost. This brought the full might and wrath of the ruling party in play against the insurgents. To crush this revolt "the army headed by the Sayyids scattered itself throughout the length and breadth of the Valley and inflicted untold atrocities on the people. The inhabitants were robbed of their domestic animals and rice and wine and other things; and some of the avaricious servants of the Sayyids killed the people in their own houses. The impotent king was grieved on account of the oppression of the people." While hunting in the forests, he contracted diarrhoea and after a few days' illness passed away in the year 1484 A.D.

1 *Srivara, Op. Cit.*, p. 256.

## SULTAN MUHAMMAD SHAH (i) 1484-86

Hassan Shah while on his death-bed fully realized the dangerous and pitiful straits to which Kashmir had been driven. He, therefore, requested his prime minister and father-in-law, Sayyid Hassan, to install one of the two grandsons of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin on the throne, as they were already well up in the affairs of the State. But the Sayyid disregarding the last wish of the king installed MUHAMMAD SHAH, the seven year old son of the king from his own daughter, Hayat Khatun. The affairs of the State were virtually carried on by Sayyid Hassan himself. The Sayyids now consolidated their powerful position in the State to the chagrin and mortification of the Kashmiris.

"Haughty in their conduct and cruel in behaviour, these arrogant men, urged by excessive cupidity, oppressed the people even like the messengers of death."<sup>1</sup> They treated the Kashmiri officials, both civil and military, with disdain, refusing them entrance to the court of the king. Bemoans Srivara: "the captains and officers came to their sovereign, they rolled on the ground like dogs, but could not enter into his presence. The Sayyids themselves were unapproachable and the servants and subjects of the king became alienated from them."

## A POPULAR UPRISING

The Kashmiris were not however slow in organising their resources in order to fight the Sayyids. They mustered strong under one banner under the leadership of Saif-ud-din Dar who quickly organised a people's army. To reinforce their strength they requested their friends, the Jammu people, to send them aid. Nor were the latter slow in response. A strong force under the command of Purushuram was despatched to Kashmir to help the popular forces. The spirits of the Kashmiris were very high. Armed men from all parts of the kingdom came to the town to swell the ranks of the insurgents.

"There was a commotion in the city and all the people became excited and ran about with arms. Soldiers came to these divisions every day from all sides, well-officered, devoted to their chiefs, and protected by shields and they received supplies of arrows with wooden shafts and fine feathers, sharp and well barbed."<sup>2</sup>

The Kashmir nobles, with the help of Purushuram's men organised a plot to murder the Sayyid leaders. One night three

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<sup>1</sup> *Srivara*, p. 268.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 277-78.



hundred men, including the Jammu soldiers, secretly entered the fort at Naushahar by bribing the guards, and remained in hiding till next morning. When Sayyid Hassan, the maternal grandfather of the boy-king and virtual ruler of the land, came out to hold court, they fell on him, and killed him and some of his kinsmen on the spot. A servant escaped through a drain and informed Sayyid Hassan's son, Sayyid Muhammad, of the tragedy. The latter immediately attacked the fort and occupied it and seized the treasure which he distributed among troops loyal to him.

The Sayyids perpetrated an equally cruel deed. Behram's son, Yusaf, had been thrown into prison along with his father by Hassan Shah and continued to be in confinement. With the death of Sayyid Hassan, the nobles of Kashmir thought it an opportune moment to put a nominee of their own on the throne in place of Muhammad Shah. And who would be more suitable and convenient than Yusaf? So Idi Raina, one of the nobles, tried to secure his release, but Sayyid Ali Baihaqi, a Sayyid dignitary came to know of the plot and he immediately put Yusaf to death. The unfortunate prince's mother, Sobana Devi, who had not seen him for many years, kept his dead body with her for three days and then had it buried. Near his grave she built a hut where she passed the rest of her days in poverty and prayer.

Though the treasury was in the hands of the Sayyids, yet the morale of the people was so high that "heaps of paddy were brought by the villagers and with it the people of Kashmir paid their expenses of living for want of money." Very soon the popular army captured the whole Valley leaving only the right side of the city in the hands of the royalists.

Elated at his easy victories, the leader of the popular party, Saif-ud-din Dar sent an invitation to Jehangir Magrey to return to Kashmir from his fort of Lohara.

#### MAGREY'S POPULAR ARMY

Jehangir who was waiting for a suitable opportunity to assert his power again, quickly returned with his followers and assumed command of the popular army. This struck terror in the Sayyid camp and they attempted to open negotiations with him. They were prepared to reappoint all the former Kashmiri officials and to return them their estates on condition that the insurgents disbanded themselves and sent back their allies, the soldiers from Jammu. But Jehangir was too clever a politician to fall a prey to their soft words. He replied that

unless the Sayyids replaced in the treasury the wealth of the State that had been purloined and laid down their arms unconditionally, no negotiations could be opened with them. This finally convinced the Sayyids that the Kashmiris meant business.

They appealed for aid to the Sayyids who were dominant in the Punjab and Delhi. Tatar Khan, who was burning to take revenge on the Kashmiris, at once equipped an army and sent it by the Pir Panjal route. But the invaders got hot reception at the hands of the frontier army under the command of one Habib Raina. Records the Chronicler :

“Surely the Goddess Kali in the guise of the river Kalidhar devoured them in anger for the benefit of the virtuous country. And when the people of Kashmir heard of the destruction of invaders, they celebrated the event by music, and the faces of the Sayyids became sad. Among the survivors of the wicked army which had met with this disaster, 2,000 lay dead. The rear of the army of the Kashmirians was such as could be relied upon, and so the Kashmirians felt no fear. They became haughty on obtaining an addition to their strength and with a glad heart determined on battle.”

The Kashmiri soldiers in the king's army deserted to the rebels and the Sayyids were, therefore, forced to pay handsomely the mercenaries from Muzaffarabad, Kishtwar, Gilgit, etc. “They showered riches on all sides so that even mechanics and cartmen took up arms and inferior servants of the king rode rare and fine horses from the stables.”

The two armies faced each other with the river between them. All the boat bridges were destroyed and the Kashmir boatmen brought the boats to the left bank, robbing the royal army of the only means of making a surprise raid on the insurgents. For two months the city was kept in constant alarm and commotion. The Kashmiri soldiers on the other hand carried out numerous nibbling raids on the enemy. “They hastily crossed the river from one side to another, killed some enemy, cut off their heads and fixed them on poles.” The Sayyids in retaliation burned the houses of leading Kashmiri nobles in the city and mercilessly tortured their kith and kin living therein. “Not a day passed in which two or three heroes were not struck with arrows and carried in dying state from the banks of the river to their own houses. Every day was terrible on account of conflagrations by fire and destruction caused by soldiers and other calamities.”

## BATTLE OF THE CITY

This state of tension could not however last for long. Seizing the initiative the youthful and spirited Saif-ud-din boldly crossed the river at the head of a strong detachment composed mainly of the fierce *dombas*, and striking left and right, caused havoc in the enemy ranks. They retreated pellmell to the suburbs of the city and should have been completely destroyed had the *Dombas* not given way to the temptation of loot and arson. "They raised their weapons against one another and plundered the principal citizens of their property." Next day the Sayyid army under Haibat Khan rallied again and launched a counter-offensive, delivering strong and massive blows on the disorderly Kashmirian army. Many brave leaders lost their lives in fighting rearguard actions while covering the retreat of their army. Conspicuous for his bravery in this battle was Daud Magrey, the talented and beautiful son of Jehangir. In their attempt to escape to their own camp on the other side of the river, the boat bridge gave way under the stampede when more than 100 Kashmiri soldiers "fell into the river and being heavily weighted by their armour they sank and died in the Vitasta."<sup>1</sup>

Intoxicated by this victory the Sayyids gave themselves up to revelry and to insensate plunder. In their lust for revenge they did not hesitate to murder even the innocent and unarmed citizens. A learned physician, Yavaneshwar, respected and honoured by all the Kashmiris, was killed in his own house. "They fixed several heads on poles and in order to strike terror into the people they placed them like rows of lamps on a piece of wood on the banks of the Vitasta."

"In the meantime the people of Kashmir collected the surviving soldiers from all directions and again raised an army." The commanders then thought out plans to overcome the enemy. Ultimately it was resolved that the army should make crossings at three widely separated points in order to divert the strength of the defending enemy. Consequently one detachment under Saif-ud-din crossed the Jhelum under cover of darkness near Pampur and by making rapid progress surprised the enemy by its sudden appearance in the morning. Another column under Jehangir crossed the river near the Anchar lake and engaged the enemy in the rear. The main assault was launched by Jonaraj with a direct crossing near the middle of the city.

## VICTORY OF POPULAR FORCES

The enemy forces led by Hasham Khan, Firoz Khan and Mir

<sup>1</sup> *Sriv. Op. Cit.* p. 289.



Baqira put up a strong resistance. The royal army was thrown into confusion by the death of the general, Mir Baqira. The Kashmiris pressing forward cut the enemy ruthlessly. The enemy soldiers "with all their might could not overcome the Kashmiris who went on plundering and destroying ; and even killed those who had taken shelter on trees ; and in this way they entered the city."

An order was issued by Jehangir Magrey to pursue the fleeing generals of the enemy. Mir Hasan rather than surrender himself resisted to the last until he was killed fighting on his horse. Similar was the case with Habib Mir, another leading general. Be it said to the credit of the Kashmiri general, Jehangir, that he issued strict orders not to show any disrespect to the dead bodies of these brave generals but to give them a decent burial. Haibat Khan, at whose hands Jehangir's son, Daud, had fallen, was captured while trying to run away, but could not escape the wrath of the soldiers who killed him there and then. The victorious army looted and destroyed the property of the Sayyids and their followers.

"Then the ministers confiscated all that had belonged to the Sayyids and exiled Ali Khan and others with their families from the kingdom. The ministers of Kashmir were of one mind and Purushuram (the leader of the Jammu contingent) and others received honours and returned to their country. The leading men among the Sayyids had hoped that by bestowing the kingdom on a boy they would enjoy prosperity, and they had accordingly acted in furtherance of their own interests. But now they were destroyed ; the Kashmiris obtained by force of arms the posts of ministers which the Sayyids had held so long."

The popular leaders who then assumed the duties of the government held a council in presence of the boy-king and distributed the functions of the State amongst themselves. They applied themselves to the task of repairing the ravages caused by the war. The citizens were given aid in the shape of loans and free gifts of timber, etc., to build their houses anew. The Shah Hamadan Khanqah as well as other temples and mosques were rebuilt at State expense on a grander scale than before. The judiciary and the police were re-organized and the cultivation of crops was encouraged. Great was the jubilation of the people at this glorious victory of theirs.

But Kashmir was not destined to enjoy peace for long. The victory that had been secured with so much bloodshed and misery was frittered away by the ambitious and unscrupulous nobles, who restarted the old game of intrigue and counter-intrigue, with the boy-king, Muhammad Shah, as the storm centre.

Some of the nobles getting jealous of the power wielded by Jehangir Magrey, sent secret messages to Fateh Khan, Muhammad's uncle, conveying their promise of support and inviting him to launch an attack on the Valley and capture the throne.

Fateh Khan was the son of Adam Khan, Zain-ul-abidin's eldest son who, on the death of his father, was brought up by his maternal uncle, the ruler of Jammu. As he grew older, Tatar Khan gave him protection at his court at Jullundur, with a view to making a convenient tool of him for fomenting trouble in Kashmir which had inflicted on him several defeats and which he had not been able to bring under his suzerainty. But Tatar Khan died without realising his ambition, and for some time his son gave protection to Fateh Khan. When he got the invitation from Kashmir, Fateh left Jullundur and came to Rajauri, where he was joined by some nobles of Kashmir passing their days in exile there.

Fateh Khan was a youth of undaunted valour and perseverance, and bore a good moral character. He was religious, possessed simple habits and was not addicted to wine or gambling. Jehangir Magrey had himself, when living in exile out of fear of the Sayyids, considered Fateh Khan to be the best man to occupy the throne of Kashmir, and had in fact planted the seed of such a desire in Fateh's mind.

But things were different now. Jehangir was all-powerful, with the boy-king Muhammad under his complete control. So when he heard that Fateh was planning an invasion of Kashmir with the tacit consent of his colleagues, he became alarmed and sent him word to desist from taking such an action. Fateh was, however, bent on accomplishing his mission and, in the middle of 1485, entered Kashmir, having won over Masud Nayak, the commander of the Pir Panjal Pass. Reaching Hirapur he was joined by his supporters from the Valley. A fierce battle was fought at Kalampora between his forces and those of Jehangir Magrey in which, through the personal valour shown by Magrey, Fateh Khan was defeated and he managed to escape to the Punjab. His supporters were hunted down, seized and imprisoned and their property confiscated.

But Fateh Khan was not a man to give in easily. He again organised his forces at Bahramgala and invaded the Valley the following year. The contending forces clashed on the Nagam *Karewa*. While Jehangir was busy with this fight, Zirak Bhatt, a follower of Fateh Khan, bravely dashed down with a few of his soldiers to Srinagar and managed to release from prison the powerful noble, Saif-ud-din Dar. Jehangir became nervous and requested the Raja of

Rajauri to intercede for him and bring about peace between him and Fateh Khan. But this peace lasted for only a few months during which Jehangir by clever diplomacy isolated Fateh Khan and won over his supporters. Fateh again fled and reorganising the remnants of his forces, marched on Jammu which he immediately occupied.

From there he again attempted an invasion, but Jehangir with the support of Sayyid Muhammad and his followers, "whom he had exiled and who in turn had killed his son", but whom he had now recalled from India, met and defeated Fateh again. He along with Saif-ud-din Dar, had to retire to Rajauri where the Raja gave them shelter.

Again he tried his luck with a stronger force recruited from the hill tribes of Khasas. Jehangir had meantime become very unpopular owing to the acute distress of the people who had to go without salt and other necessities of life, the passes having been blockaded by Fateh Khan's forces. One and a half *Pala* of rock salt was sold for twentyfive *dinaras*, and people were forced to eat the lotus-stalk which they derisively named 'Magrey-curry'. Moreover, Jehangir had broken his pledge of protection to those who had earlier crossed over to his side and treacherously killed Zirak Bhatt and his followers.

So when Fateh Khan's forces, under the command of Saif-ud-din reached Damodar *Karewa*, seven miles from Srinagar, they met only a feeble resistance from Jehangir Magrey who was wounded ; and deserted by even his Sayyid allies, he retired to the city. His army was dispersed and the king, Muhammad Shah, was captured and kept in close confinement in the palace but provided with all comforts. Fateh Khan was proclaimed ruler and ascended the throne under the title of Sultan Fateh Shah.

#### SULTAN FATEH SHAH (i) 1486-93

Fateh Shah signalled his rule with the appointment of his trusted follower, Saif-ud-din Dar, as prime minister. The condition of the kingdom was indeed deplorable. There was complete lawlessness and the Khasa soldiers who had come with him plundered the city, "enjoying at ease for six months what others had saved in their houses with great care."<sup>1</sup>

Fateh Shah tried his best to curb the power of the nobles but was not successful. He became merely a tool in their hands, particularly of Saif-ud-din. Galling under his yoke he sought his destruction with the help of the powerful but intriguing Shams Chak and his three friends Nasrat Raina, Sarhang Raina and Musa Raina.

<sup>1</sup> *Srivara, Ibid.*, p. 335.



It was during these troubled days that the Chaks were establishing their position as the successors to the dynasty of Shah Mir by engaging themselves in complicated but intelligent intrigues, political murders and by raising the religious bogey. Originally of Dardic descent, the Chaks had entered Kashmir simultaneously with the rise to power of Shah Mir. It is a strange coincidence that Ramacandra who gave shelter to Rinchin and Shah Mir took also into service a third fugitive from the Karakoram—Lankar Chak. Being of a powerful build and possessing incredible physical strength, Lankar Chak slowly rose to an eminent position under Shah Mir. He brought in a good number of his followers who settled towards the northern district of the Valley. The Chaks being of a warlike and ferocious nature soon gained ascendancy over the inhabitants of Kashmir who had been reduced to low straits; and their rise to power was so quick and phenomenal that they were already a source of menace to Zain-ul-abidin, who predicted their further victories in the political field of Kashmir. Protected by strongly fortified hill positions in various side-valleys and forests of Handwara district, they carried away precious loot. With the decline of the power of the later Sultans they gained an upper hand at the court and ultimately were successful in usurping the throne and establishing their kingship over Kashmir.

The most powerful personality among them during the period of civil war between Muhammad and Fateh Shah was Shams Chak who is reputed to have possessed a strong physique and unrivalled bravery. Shams Chak, however, gained his powerful position more as a result of his unscrupulous intrigues than by merit. Beginning his career under the patronage of the powerful noble, Sayyid Muhammad, he was not slow in changing sides at the latter's fall from power. He continued these tactics during the troublous days of the stampede for ascendancy amongst the various powerful clans till finally he joined the services of Saif-ud-din Dar, Fateh Shah's minister. But even here he would not sit quietly. He won over two more powerful nobles, Musa Raina and Sarhang Raina, whom he set up as rivals to his master Saif-ud-din hoping to advance his ambitions. At about this time he gained considerable power by marrying the daughter of another Chak chief, Hussain, son of Pandu Chak.

With the support of the three Raina nobles, Shams Chak planned the overthrow of Saif-ud-din, and attacked him at a village near Srinagar. In a fierce hand to hand fight Sarhang Raina dealt a mortal blow on Saif-ud-din Dar's head, and was himself killed in return. With the death of Dar, Fateh Shah breathed more freely and rewarded Shams Chak by appointing him as his prime minister.

It was however a short-lived peace. Hardly had two years passed when dissensions again broke out among the nobles—this time between Shams Chak and Sayyid Muhammad, supported by Ibrahim Magrey, son of Jehangir Magrey, and Idi Raina. The latter attacked Shams Chak in the vicinity of Bulbul Lankar in Srinagar and defeated him. Shams Chak escaped with his life and was later joined by Kazi Chak who had also fought his way through enemy ranks. And as Fateh Shah had taken the side of Shams Chak in this fight, he had to quit along with him and take shelter at Naushera in Rajauri. The nobles then took Muhammad Shah out of confinement and installed him for the second time on the throne of Kashmir.

#### SULTAN MUHAMMAD SHAH (ii) 1493-1505

With his restoration to the throne, Muhammad Shah who had now attained the age of sixteen, appointed his maternal uncle, Sayyid Muhammad, as his prime minister, and Ibrahim Magrey as the minister of revenue and expenditure.

Besides the Chaks we come across another powerful clan, that of Magreys. The Magreys were raised to a pre-eminent position under the rule of Sultan Shams-ud-din who raised the flower of his officers for the army from this clan. During the reign of Sultan Sikandar, his minister, Rai Magrey also rose to power and under the latter Sultan the Magrey clan played an important and decisive role in shaping the political history of the kingdom. The Magreys were staunch followers of the Sunni doctrine and were thus religiously and politically pitted against the Chaks who had adopted the Shia faith.

Apart from the rise of powerful clans and feudal landlords, an event during this period is worthy of notice. This was the appearance in Kashmir in about 1492 A.D. of a preacher from Talish on the shores of the Caspian, named Shams-ud-din Iraqi who described himself as a disciple of Sayyid Muhammad Noor Baksh of Khorasan and preached a medley of doctrines. He professed to be an orthodox Sunni like most of the inhabitants of the Valley, but the doctrines set forth in his theological work, *Ahwath* or "Most Comprehensive", are described as "conforming neither to the Sunni nor to the Shia creed." But the preaching of his doctrines ultimately led to the foundation of the Shia sect in Kashmir. And when the Chaks adopted these doctrines wholesale, seeds were sown for outbursts of religious frenzy throughout the rule of the Sultans and after.

Shams-ud-din Iraqi had several devoted followers among the nobles, the principal one being Musa Raina. Sayyid Muhammad who

was the *de facto* ruler, did not approve of Shams-ud-din's ideas, and compelled him to retire to Skardu. Musa Raina and the Chaks were greatly incensed at this, and with the help of Ibrahim Magrey raised a rebellion against Muhammad Shah and invited Fateh Shah who was biding his time at Naushera. Fateh Shah entered the Valley and at Hirapur was joined by the rebellious nobles. In order to crush him, Sayyid Muhammad and the king marched with a strong force to Zainakot, where a sanguinary battle was fought, and Fateh Khan had a reverse. Next day, however, he reorganised his forces and offered battle. Sayyid Muhammad lost his life while fighting bravely and this so demoralised the royal forces that they ran pellmell, leaving the road to Srinagar open to the victorious army of Fateh Khan. Muhammad Shah narrowly escaped capture and became a fugitive again.

#### SULTAN FATEH SHAH (ii) 1505-14

On his ascension to the throne for the second time, Fateh Shah was not slow in recognising the services of Shams Chak and appointed him as his prime minister. But the intriguing nature of another supporter of Fateh Shah, Musa Raina, could not brook the rising power of Shams Chak. And thus the nine years of Fateh Khan's second tenure of kingship were passed in petty intrigues and internecine warfare resulting in untold miseries for the people.

Musa Raina with the connivance of Fateh Shah who was chaffing under the domineering power of Shams Chak, got the latter arrested and thrown into prison, where he was ultimately murdered. Shams, however, atoned for his misdeeds and intrigues by giving a bold and brave fight to his assassins, and unarmed laid low twelve of his opponents before he succumbed to the injuries inflicted on his body.

Musa Raina now succeeded Shams Chak to prime ministership. His first act in office was to recall Shams-ud-din Iraqi from Skardu to preach the Shia doctrine to the people of the Valley. He openly helped him in his missionary activities. This and the manner in which Shams Chak was murdered, resulted in rousing the anger of the other nobles against him; and even though he conducted the administration of the land efficiently, he could not stand the combined power of rival nobles who, headed by Ibrahim Magrey, forced him to flee to India. He was however attacked on the way and killed.

The office of Wazir was then occupied by Jehangir, but he could remain in power for only forty days, things being made hot for him by a rival noble, Usman Malik, who now became Wazir. The latter was in turn imprisoned after enjoying power for only two months. Jehangir



Magrey returned from exile and Fateh Shah had to reappoint him as his Wazir. After only a year, however, Malik Usman who had been freed from prison, started his intrigue against Jehangir and had his two sons arrested. This unnerved Jehangir who again fled to Poonch. Thereupon Usman became Wazir again, and to appease his rival claimants to power, divided the kingdom into three parts, retaining one for himself and handing over the other two to Shankar Raina and Nasrat Raina.

Conditions in the Valley were deplorable at this time. The people were naturally tired of the political uncertainty. The treasury was empty and the economic ruination of the kingdom was nearly complete. The feudal lords were busy in extorting as much money in cash and kind as they could from their tenants and used all their power to suppress their liberties. They established a semblance of government in their narrow territories of which they were undisputed masters. The only class of people, however, who benefited from the chaotic conditions of the times were the martial tribes from the surrounding hilly regions who came down to loot the unfortunate inhabitants of the Valley.

Pitted against one another, the three powerful barons could not remain in peace for long. Meanwhile all the exiled nobles patched up their differences and decided to launch an attack on the Valley and restore Muhammad Shah to the throne. A series of battles followed in which the forces of Fateh Shah, divided amongst the three nobles, and without any coordination among them, were defeated. He had to flee. Usman attempted to escape but was captured and later killed in prison. Shankar and Nasrat meekly submitted and were pardoned.

#### MUHAMMAD SHAH (iii) 1514-15

Muhammad Shah now became the Sultan for the third time and appointed Ibrahim Magrey as his prime minister. But with the Shia-Sunni differences attaining a sharper pitch there flared up disturbances again. The Chaks who were almost all Shias, would not brook the rising power of the Sayyids and Magreys who were staunch Sunnis. The Chaks thereafter determined to gain political ascendancy and ultimately the crown, not only for their material advancement but also for gaining an upper hand against their religious opponents, the Sunnis.

The Chak nobles under Kazi Chak, therefore, promising support to Fateh Khan who was related to Chaks from his mother's side, raised a rebellion, and made it easier for him to win a victory over the forces of Muhammad Shah. Without offering any material resistance, the latter again became a fugitive and left for the Punjab. Fateh Shah ascended the throne for the third time.

## FATEH SHAH (iii) 1515-17

Fateh Shah's last three years of reign were as usual spent in intrigues and cross-intrigues of the rival factions. He was a mere figure-head, the Chak and other nobles assigning him only the revenues of the crown lands, and dividing the rest of the kingdom among themselves.

In the autumn of 1515, Muhammad Shah with the help of Magrey made another bid to capture the throne, but did not meet with any success. After wandering for nearly two years he proceeded to the court of Sultan Sikandar Lodi and sought and obtained aid from him in regaining the throne of Kashmir. With a force of 3,000 men supplied by Lodi, Muhammad Shah set out for Kashmir. But before his arrival in the Valley serious differences had arisen between Fateh Shah and his three nobles. The latter raised a rebellion and forced Fateh Shah to flee to the Punjab where he died in August 1517.

Muhammad Shah on hearing of these developments decided to leave the Lodi supporters behind in the Punjab, and with only 2,000 of his personal followers proceeded towards Srinagar.

## MUHAMMAD SHAH (iv) 1517-28

On ascending the throne for the fourth time, Muhammad Shah appointed Kazi Chak as his prime minister. He then returned to the Punjab to thank his Lodi supporters and to send back their troops. Meanwhile, however, the passes were blocked with snow and he had to spend the winter at Naushera.

During his absence, the Valley was plunged into civil war. A host of petty nobles engaged themselves in fights among themselves, turning the land into a veritable Bedlam.

During this period Kashmir was passing through a medley of political, economic and religious currents and cross-currents. Across the eastern frontiers, in Central Asia, the Mughals were founding a strong kingdom under Abu Said. Another branch of this dynasty was sending its cohorts over the Khybar to lay the firm foundations of an empire. It was not, therefore, surprising that the Valley should become an inviting prey to these conquerors.

The internecine wars further weakened the kingdom economically. Kashmir depended on some essential commodities on India and Central Asia, most important of these being salt, textiles and shawl-wool. With a weak government at home the trade routes became vulnerable to attack by unscrupulous hill tribes and bandits, whom the forces of the king could not suppress, ultimately resulting in the complete break-

down of the entire economy of Kashmir. Added to this was the rising tide of Shia and Sunni differences which supplied an easy handle to more clever politicians under the Mughals to interfere in the internal affairs of the kingdom. How all these various forces came to a head will become clear with the study of the conflicting and confusing history of the last hundred years of the later Sultans and Chaks.

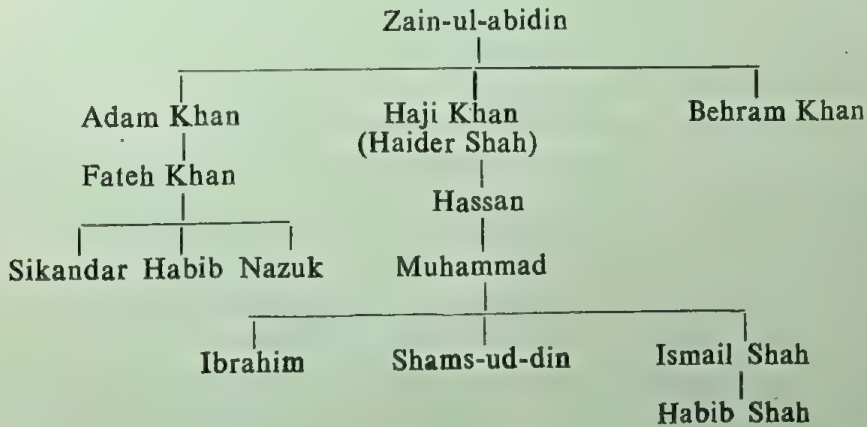


## CHAPTER TWELVE

### RISE AND FALL OF CHAK DYNASTY

OUT OF THE confusing picture of the currents and cross currents of the political intrigues at this time, there emerge the personalities of two rival nobles, Malik Abdal the son of Ibrahim Magrey, and Kazi the leader of the Chak clan and hero of many a battle. Besides, there appear on the scene the three sons of Fateh Shah—Sikandar, Habib and Nazuk. Habib died early while fleeing from Kashmir after a defeat at the hands of Kazi Chak. Sikandar was made a tool of by the Magreys and later by Babar, and finally lost his life by torture in prison. Nazuk, however, lived longer to be a puppet in the hands of a Mughal adventurer from Central Asia—Mirza Haider Dughlat—to be ultimately betrayed and forced to flee for his life to the Punjab.

To follow the narrative of the events of this time, it will be convenient to indicate here the relations of the successors of Zain-ul-abidin :



Kazi Chak acquired enough power during these disturbed times to be able to subdue a number of nobles and restore peaceful conditions in the Valley for some months. But his power aroused resentment among his rivals, particularly Malik Abdal Magrey, who combined together and forced Kazi to leave the Valley and seek shelter at Naushera (1527).

Soon after, however, Kashmir was threatened by an invasion of the Mughals under Kuchak Beg and Ali Beg who were sent by Babar to

help Sikandar in securing the throne, but really to bring the kingdom under the Mughal hegemony.

Babar had brought Delhi under his sway and was directing all his energies to build an empire. Kashmir occupying an important strategic position could not escape his notice and when he learnt of the internal troubles in the Valley, he thought it to be an opportune moment to fulfil his ambition. The Mughals, inhabitants of a cold country, had an additional incentive to bring the beautiful Valley with its salubrious climate, under their rule : they very much desired to spend the hot Indian summer months there.

Notwithstanding their weakness for intrigue and race for power, the feudal lords of the Valley, however, rallied under the banner of Kazi Chak whose patriotism was stirred. Though he had received no orders from Muhammad Shah, he decided to repel the invasion. He collected a force from the surrounding hill tribes and exiled Kashmiri soldiers, and sent his son, Ghazi, a boy of eighteen, to conduct operations against the Mughals. Ghazi and his soldiers gave such a tough fight to the forces of Babar that they had to withdraw ignominiously.

This victory over the powerful Mughal army made Kazi Chak a hero to the Kashmiris and he was all powerful. He was reappointed as Wazir and with the popular support behind him he soon dethroned Muhammad Shah and put his son, Ibrahim, on the throne. But he was not left in peace by his opponents. Abdal Magrey his rival who had taken shelter under Babar induced the latter to make another effort for the conquest of Kashmir.

An efficient and compact army was organised for this purpose from Lahore. Having gained a bitter experience in his earlier campaign, Babar made a diplomatic move. He had realised that with all their internal differences the Kashmiris had the knack of joining together and fighting to the bitter end any foreign invader. Babar, therefore, used Nazuk Shah as a decoy hoping to make the Kashmiris believe that it was another attempt from a scion of Shah Mir to gain the throne of Kashmir. Nazuk Shah was declared the Sultan of Kashmir. The trick succeeded and early in the spring of 1528 the rebel chiefs with Nazuk Shah and the Mughal army entered Kashmir and defeated the forces led by Kazi Chak. Kazi Chak was pursued out of Kashmir by Abdal Magrey who now became all powerful.

Nazuk Shah remained on the throne for only a year and Muhammad Shah was restored in 1530 for the fifth time.

Abdal Magrey then thought it prudent to send away his Mughal allies and when they left with handsome presents they carried tempting

tales of the beauty of Kashmir and the opportunities that the internecine warfare among its nobles offered for Mughal intervention and its ultimate subjugation.

Meanwhile Babar died and Humayun succeeded him to the throne of Delhi. His brother, Kamran, the governor of the Punjab, organised a strong military force and set out towards the Valley. With Naushera as his base, he despatched a force of 3,000 horse under Mehram Beg to undertake the reduction of the Valley. Torn by the feuds among the nobles, Kashmir could offer no effective resistance and the Mughals entered Srinagar without a fight and setting it on fire killed the forces who came down from the hills to oppose them.

But soon the Kashmir nobles patched up their differences, invited Kazi Chak to lead them, and launched a relentless campaign of guerilla warfare. The Mughals were harassed. After only a month and a half, finding it difficult to maintain their hold on the Valley, they entered into a pact with Kazi Chak according to which they agreed to quit the kingdom on promise of a safe passage to the Punjab.

After the withdrawal of the Mughals, Abdal Magrey, who continued to be the Wazir distributed large tracts of the Valley among his near relatives. It resulted in bitter and sanguinary skirmishes throughout the length and breadth of Kashmir. While their followers were engaged in cutting one another's throats, a greater calamity was approaching Kingdom in the shape of a Tartar invasion from Central Asia.

Conditions in Central Asia had become very confused after the death of Tamerlane. Factions among the scions of the Khan were legion. Wars were on foot on every side; states were being overrun and cities besieged, while rulers arose or went down, almost from day to day according to their fortune in war or intrigue. The Shia-Sunni conflict there also helped to fan the fire of factious warfare. In a brief period of 75 years the whole empire of Tamerlane was fragmented into small principalities ruled over by petty, narrow-minded chieftains.

In such a confusing period a small kingdom was carved out by Abu Said round about his capital situated at Kashgar. With his daring exploits he attracted a large number of adventurous soldiers and with their help was successful in consolidating his kingdom and leading expeditions to the neighbouring countries.

### MIRZA HAIDER DUGHLAT

One such adventurer was Mirza Haider Dughlat. Born in 1499-1500 at Tashkent where his father was the governor, he was on the assassination of the latter carried away to Bukhara by his relations. From there



he went to Badakshan and thence, after a year, was brought to Kabul. In his early days he was patronised by Babar, his close relative—their mothers being sisters—and under his care he acquired a great proficiency in literature and the science of war. Full of ambition, he left at the age of fifteen the protection of Babar while the latter was still in Ferghana and joined the forces of Abu Said in Kashgar. By dint of his hard labour and intelligence he quickly succeeded in winning the confidence of Abu Said. It was at the instance of Mirza Dughlat that his master undertook the ambitious campaign for the reduction of Ladakh and Tibet. For nineteen years till the death of Abu Said, Dughlat served his master faithfully.

In July 1532 Abu Said, his son, Sikandar, and Mirza Dughlat led an army to Ladakh and Baltistan which were easily subdued. While in Ladakh, Abu Said who was in his old age suffered from the effects of marching over high altitudes and in cold regions. Mirza Dughlat advised his master to remain in Ladakh and himself, at the head of a force of 5,000 cavalry and infantry, made a repid march to the Valley of Kashmir. The Kashmiris engaged in their chronic internecine warfare were taken by surprise and their frontier guards at the head of the Zojila were overpowered. In the course of a few days Dughlat's troops entered Srinagar, devastating with fire and sword the important towns on the way and frightening the inhabitants of Srinagar out of their homes. The city was sacked and looted and the inhabitants were put to great hardship during the ensuing winter months of January to March 1533.

However, facing their enemy boldly the Kashmiris organised their resistance under Kazi Chak and Abdal Magrey, now united against a common foe. A regular guerilla warfare ensued. Dughlat's forces, hemmed in a small valley, were drawn out of their dugouts into the open where they were given a crushing defeat. Frustrated and mortified, dissensions broke out in their ranks and Mirza Haider considered it prudent to sue for peace. Accordingly negotiations were opened between the Kashmir nobles and the Mirza and finally an agreement was arrived at. The Mirza and, his forces were allowed to depart from the Valley at the end of May, 1533, by the way they had come. Though the Mirza in his *T rikh-i-Rashidi* gives some face-saving explanations, e.g., that "the *khutba* was read and coins were struck in the name of the Khan (Abu Said) and one of Muhammad Shah's daughter was wedded to Iskandar Sultan", the fact remains that the Kashmiris had at a time of emergency given a good account of themselves and rallying their strength under their leaders, had driven the invader out of Kashmir.

But even though the Kashmiris gained a signal victory against an

unscrupulous foe, the country had suffered such enormous loss that it was really a great problem for the rulers to bring some relief to the unfortunate Kashmiris. As if this was not enough Nature sent them a greater calamity in the shape of a severe famine. Thousands perished of hunger. But fortunately the next crop was a bumper one and saved the remaining population from total annihilation. The Maliks Kazi Chak and Abdal Magrey faced the situation manfully and made strenuous efforts to import foodstuffs from the neighbouring regions of Jammu, Rajauri and Muzaffarabad. All the gold lying in the king's treasury was used in purchasing and carrying these foodstuffs into the Valley. It was during this brief spell of peace that the king, Muhammad Shah, after a chequered reign of 34 years during which period he faced many changes of fortune, died in Srinagar in the year 1537 A.D.

Muhammad Shah was succeeded by his second son, Shams-ud-din who like his father, came under the domination of Kazi Chak. Kazi Chak, a shrewd politician gave his daughter in marriage to Shams-ud-din's brother. After only a year's rule, Shams-ud-din died and was succeeded by his brother Ismail, the son-in-law of Kazi Chak.

#### SULTAN ISMAIL SHAH II 1538-40

Kazi ruled the kingdom in the name of Ismail. But being flushed with power, his attitude towards other nobles became overbearing. The result was that a regular conspiracy was hatched resulting in Kazi's flight to the Ghakhar hills. While in exile he received aid from an old ally Sayyid Ibrahim Baihaqi and with his help he returned to power. But conditions in Kashmir had grown worse during his absence. The nobles after driving out Kazi had become powerful and had established their own separate petty principalities, owing allegiance to none. Kazi was unable to bring them under, and he, therefore, followed the procedure adopted earlier by Fateh Shah and divided the Valley into three equal parts—one part was left under the Sultan, one was given to Sayyid Ibrahim Baihaqi to rule and the third was retained by the Kazi.

The one weakness from which the Chaks suffered was their forcible imposition of Shia doctrines on the people. Kazi was in this respect no better than others. He outdid Musa Raina in the religious persecution of the Hindus and Sunnis. The result was that he and his tribe were hated by a large majority of the Kashmiris. Matters, however, became so hot for Kazi that he was forced to flee from the country. There were demonstrations by the people and the Shia localities were sacked. The Chaks retaliated by killing many important leaders

of the Sunnis. At last there was an open revolt headed by the Magrey clan, who sought aid from Humayun, the Emperor of Delhi in driving away Kazi.

#### MIRZA HAIDER'S RULE

Khwaja Haji, who acted as their agent with the Mughals, met Mirza Dughlat (who had after the death of Abu Said taken service under Humayun) at Lahore. Humayun was at this time pressed hard by the forces of Sher Shah Sur and had left Delhi. While in Lahore Mirza Dughlat put before him a plan proposing that Humayun at the head of a strong force should enter the Kashmir Valley (which he declared was so weak that it would offer no serious resistance) and establish there a nucleus of his government. But Mirza Dughlat's plan did not appeal to other councillors of Humayun particularly Kamran. When they heard that Sher Shah had advanced up to the Beas, panic seized them and Humayun then agreed with Dughlat's plan. A small force of 400 men was placed under his command and it was hoped that with the help of the Kashmir nobles he would be able to secure the Valley for Humayun. But before he could reach the outskirts of Kashmir, Humayun gave up the idea of proceeding further and instead fled to Persia. Mirza Dughlat was, however, confident of his success in Kashmir and with his small force entered the Valley by way of Tosamaidan Pass. Helped by the Magreys and the people who were tired of Chak domination, he won an easy victory and occupied Srinagar in October, 1540. Placing Nazuk Shah on the throne, he carried on the administration in his name for a period of eleven years.

#### SULTAN NAZUK SHAH 1540-1551

Kashmir thus became a pawn on the chessboard of Mughal politics. With Magreys and Sayyids aiding the Mirza, Kazi Chak fled to Humayun's opposite number, Sher Shah Sur. But the latter was already too busy in consolidating his hard won territory to attend to Kashmir affairs. Kazi Chak after some time married his niece to Sher Shah and thus easily obtained the aid of a force led by Adil Khan to invade Kashmir. But the Kashmiris could not brook the domination of the Chaks any more and Adil's forces were given a crushing defeat by Dughlat. Later another chief of the Chak family, Rigi, organised a rebellion, but had to flee in defeat and join Kazi. Both of them united their forces and marched against Haider but again sustained a heavy defeat which hastened the death of Kazi who passed away in 1544.



Mirza Haider Dughlat now in his matured years ruled the Valley on more liberal lines. But the one mistake that he committed was to appoint only his Mughal followers to high posts in the city as well as in the districts. The Kashmiri nobles were deprived of their Jagirs which were distributed among his Mughal followers. The ousted Kashmiri nobles could not for a long time organise a united resistance against him being weakened by internal feuds. The Mirza actually had a mind to add Kashmir to the dominions of Humayun, but the fortunes of the latter being in doldrums, the Mirza maintained Nazuk Shah on the throne, not daring to take the open risk of facing a united front which the Kashmiris were wont to raise against a foreign usurper.

During the eleven years of his reign, Mirza Haider gave peace and orderly government to the Kingdom. He opened schools and built several mosques in Srinagar with *hamams*, ensuring warm water to the faithful for ablutions even during cold and frosty days of winter. He introduced new types of windows and doors in public buildings and improved the architectural designs. It was as a result of his direct encouragement that many of the industries originally introduced by Zain-ul-abidin were revived. Kashmiris are indebted to his cook, Nagz Beg, for the revival of shawl manufacture. The people with their inherent aptitude for the manufacture of the artistic-cum-utility goods quickly responded to the encouragement extended to them by the Mirza. The trade with Central Asia and Persia assumed huge proportions and in a very short time the people regained the economic prosperity which they had lost after the death of Zain-ul-abidin. In order to make the highroads to these regions safe for the caravans, he subdued Ladakh, Baltistan, Pakhli and Rajauri. An attempt was made to reduce Kishtwar too, but it did not meet with success. He also meted out justice in an impartial manner.

Affected by the malady of the times, Mirza Haider who at first, owing to political expediency, had been very liberal towards the Shias let loose an era of persecution and tyranny against them. Whether he honestly believed his Sunnism to be superior to other creeds, or whether he wanted to gain the sympathies of the Sunni population with whose help he had acquired power, is difficult to say. But one thing is certain ; this policy of his cost him his position as well as his life.

The self-respect of the Kashmiris had been greatly wounded by the overbearing attitude of the various Mughal officers of the Mirza. They again forgot for the time being their internal religious-cum-political differences and organised a strong uprising under Hussain Magrey.

## MIRZA'S UNPOPULARITY AND DEATH

The rebels established their headquarters at Khanpur near Rajauri. The Mirza sent his cousin, Qara Bahadur, at the head of an army composed of Mughal and Kashmiri detachments to reduce the fort. The Kashmiri soldiers of Qara defected due to their harbouring a strong resentment against the Mughals. It resulted in the defeat and consequent imprisonment of Qara.

This was a signal for a general uprising all over the outlying hill districts of the kingdom. The Ladakhis killed Dughlat's governor and forced his garrison to flee to the Valley. Similarly the people of Pakhli drove out his governor who was killed along with his troops by the Kashmiris on entering the Valley. Koka Mir, another commander of Mirza Dughlat, who was sent to Kishtwar met, with a similar fate.

All these developments unnerved Dughlat. He rode to Khanpur at the head of a powerful column to punish the insurgents. But he met with further defections from his Kashmiri soldiers. In order to surprise the enemy, he, along with a few trusted followers, made a night attack on the fort of Khanpur. At once there was a tumult in the enemy camp who let go a shower of arrows at the intruders and in the fight that ensued Mirza Dughlat was killed. This led to a widespread rising throughout the Valley and the Mughal garrisons were overpowered and annihilated. Kashmir again reverted to an independent position. Mirza Haider's body was brought to Srinagar where it lies buried in the graveyard of the Sultans of Kashmir.

Mirza Haider was a versatile man, brave and adventurous, and a patron of learning and art. He had at his court several accomplished musicians. Wielding a fluent pen, he wrote several books, the chief being his absorbing *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* which he completed while in Kashmir. But all his good qualities were offset by his zeal to preserve the Islamic orthodoxy and to ban Shia and Sufi sects. Moreover he never identified himself with the Kashmiris. This naturally made him unpopular with them and weakened his position.

After the death of Mirza Haider the power devolved upon the predominant noble, Idi Raina. Kashmir could not escape the covetous eyes of the rulers of Delhi where now Sher Shah Sur had been succeeded by his son, Saleem Shah. But as before the invader was given a crushing defeat by the Kashmiris who again rallied under a powerful chief, Daulat Chak.

After the defeat of Saleem, Daulat Chak became very popular. Most of the followers deserted Idi Raina which resulted in making Daulat Chak the indisputable master of Kashmir. In 1552 following

a rising of some ambitious nobles, he deposed Nazuk and proclaimed Ibrahim Shah as the king. Nazuk finding no supporter of his cause left for the Punjab. Daulat was lenient to other nobles and with their co-operation asserted suzerainty over Ladakh. But the affairs of the Kashmir court did not remain in a stable position for long. Soon a family quarrel started between Daulat Chak and Ghazi Chak. The result was that Daulat Chak who had fallen a prey to communal bigotry was ousted by Ghazi Chak who deposed Ibrahim Shah and installed his brother Ismail Shah on the throne. When, however, the latter died in 1557, he proclaimed Ismail's son, Habib Shah, his own nephew, as the king.

#### SULTAN HABIB SHAH 1557-61

In 1559 Qara Bahadur who, after the extirpation of Mirza Dughlat's forces in Kashmir, had gone to Delhi, was instigated by some Chak relatives of Ghazi to invade Kashmir. Wishing to take revenge on the Kashmiris, he led an army of 10,000 horse and infantry. He was opposed by Ghazi Chak and his Kashmiri forces in the Rajauri mountains. To stir up the Kashmiris to their best efforts he promised them a gold *Mohar* for every head of the enemy's soldiers. It is said that 7,000 heads were laid before him and the Ghazi, who was greatly elated at the success, more than fulfilled his promise and paid two *Mohar* for each head.

But time had now come when the Chaks could do away with the farce of maintaining a puppet on the throne. Ghazi Chak now began to work out of his plan. He would accuse the king of various misdemeanours and acts of faithlessness. The Sultan who was powerless could not put forth his defence. At last one day in 1561 A.D., Ali Chak, brother of Ghazi Chak, rebuked the Sultan in open court and taking off his crown placed it on the head of his brother, Ghazi Chak. The courtiers hailed Ghazi as the ruler of Kashmir. Habib was removed from the throne and kept a prisoner.

#### GHAZI SHAH THE FIRST CHAK RULER

Ghazi Chak (1561-63) who thus had the throne of Kashmir was in the beginning of his career as king a very discreet person. He devoted his attention to the removal of various evils prevalent in the State. He was particularly careful to rehabilitate the finances. Due to various factors, political and natural, the treasury had become empty. He established a semblance of peace and reconquered some of the former territories of the kingdom, notably Skardu, Gilgit, Kishtwar and Pakhli. To these he deputed intelligent and able governors.



Ghazi Chak is known as a ruthless dispenser of justice. A single instance will illustrate this trait in his character. Once a servant of his son was caught plucking fruit in an orchard. The king ordered his hands to be cut off. This incensed his son who became very sullen. The king asked his uncle Malik Muhammad to admonish him. The boy in a fit of rage attacked his uncle and inflicted mortal blows on him. The king ordered his son's arrest and after a short and summary trial sentenced him to death. To put his subjects in awe, he further ordered his remains to be exhibited on the gibbets for seven days.

But the chronic malady of internal strifes could not be uprooted by even such a strong ruler. Soon a rebellion was organised by his kinsmen Nasrat and Yusuf Chak. The king, however, put it down ruthlessly. The then head of Idi Raina's family, Shams Raina, went to Humayun to seek aid from him. But the day he reached Delhi, Humayun died as a result of a fall. Shams Raina thereafter went to and sought aid from Abdul Mali the favourite of Humayun. Mali had incurred the displeasure of Akbar and had been arrested and sent to Lahore. From there he managed to escape and take refuge in the Ghakkar country. Mali who was already planning an invasion was further encouraged by Shams Raina. They both invaded Kashmir but were severely defeated.

Ghazi Chak though a stern ruler, led a life of frugality, and was a poet too. But he was afflicted by the fell disease of leprosy which increased in extent so much that he had to abdicate in favour of his brother, Hussain Chak. He ordered his household effects to be auctioned, but these fetched so little that he was angered and wanted to re-ascend the throne to exert his authority. He was, however, checkmated by his brother Hussain and died of a broken heart when his son's eyes were put out by the latter.

#### HUSSAIN SHAH 1563-70

By the time Hussain Shah Chak ascended the throne the bitterness in the relations between the Sunnis and Shias had greatly died out, so much so that Hussain Shah appointed Sayyid Habib, a Sunni jurist from Khwarizm as the Qazi of Srinagar and Preacher at Jama Masjid. He also gave complete religious freedom to Hindus and used to participate in their festivals like Sripancami. The king was a pious man and devoted three days out of the week to religious discourses. He was very fond of music. Occasionally he went to hunt, more for pleasure than for real game. He reorganised his army and took his officers into close confidence.

He sent his brother Shanker Chak, as governor, to Rajaouri. While there Shanker raised an army from the martial tribes of that place, and with this marched against his brother in Srinagar. The king's able and devoted minister, Malik Muhammad Naji, with great pluck and diplomacy was successful in defeating this brother of the king.

Towards the end of Hussain's rule in 1568-69 the Shia-Sunni differences assumed formidable proportions, no doubt helped by the machinations of the Imperial Government at Agra. Yusuf Mandav, a Shia, flushed with the power wielded by his co-religionists, the Chaks, attacked the chief Sunni Moulvi, Qazi Habib. He was arrested and was sentenced to death by the Qazis (Islamic jurists). The order was carried out and Mandav was mercilessly stoned to death in public. This enraged the Shias who clamoured for the punishment of the Qazis who had passed the sentence of death on Mandav. Meanwhile Akbar had sent two envoys, both of Shia faith, to induce Hussain to acknowledge his suzerainty. While in Srinagar Mirza Muqim, the Imperial envoy actively interfered in the Mandav affair and asked the governor, (or district magistrate) of Srinagar, Ali Koka, to hand over the Qazis to the Shias. The latter dragged them through the streets and executed two Qazis, Mulla Firuz and Mulla Yusuf Almas.

Meanwhile Hussain Shah who treated Akbar's envoys with great respect, sent them back with presents for the Emperor and also sent his daughter for marriage to Prince Salim. But before they could reach Agra, several Sunni nobles and Maulvis from Kashmir had hurried to the Imperial Court and narrated the sad tale to Akbar. The Emperor was highly incensed and ordered the arrest and death of Mirza Muqim and sent back Hussain Shah's presents and his daughter to Srinagar. This rebuke from Akbar grieved Hussain Shah who died shortly after. But even before his death the struggle for the throne had started. Ali Khan his brother headed a rebellion and the king abdicated in his favour.

#### ALI SHAH 1570-78

Ali Khan ascended the throne under the title of Ali Shah. He was a pious man and without any sense of bigotry. Imbued with the desire to end the senseless rancour among the followers of the two creeds Ali Shah appointed Mubarak Baihaqi, a Sunni, as his prime minister. The latter was essentially a man of peace and was instrumental in getting the pardon for some Sunnis who had been condemned for their rebellious acts. Ali Shah held the great Sunni saint Hamza Mukhdoom in great respect, as also the scholar-diplomat, Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi.

Ali Shah attacked and defeated Bahadur Singh the chief of Kishtwar who sent his daughter in token of his submission for Ali Shah's grandson, Yaqub, to wed. It was because of this relation that Yaqub got refuge at Kishtwar when he was defeated by the imperial forces of the Mughals during the latter's invasion and conquest of Kashmir.

Early in his reign he had to suppress a revolt raised by his son, Yusuf. The youthful prince had treacherously murdered his cousin brother, Aiba Khan, Ghazi Shah's son, as he too was a claimant to the throne. This angered his father and fearing a severe reprimand, Yusuf, instigated by evil advisers, defied his father. But ultimately they got reconciled to one other.

Meanwhile Akbar was extending his influence over Kashmir. Unwilling to attack the Kashmir forces in their impregnable mountain fastnesses, he resorted to diplomacy. In July 1578 he sent Sadr-ud-din and Maulana Ishaqi to Ali Shah's court. The envoys so pleaded their master's cause and so overawed Ali Shah with the stories of Mughal power that he ordered the *Khutba* to be read in the Emperor's name and sent Hussain Shah's daughter for Salim to wed.

The last and the only attempt by the Shah Miris to regain the throne of Kashmir was made by Haider Khan and Saleem Khan, sons of Nazuk Shah. They were helped by some nobles from Kashmir and receiving promises of help from disgruntled elements, they set out with a force towards the Valley to contest the throne. Lohar Chak and Muhammad Chak, the army commanders of Ali Shah, were sent against them to Naushera. The Chak commanders adopted a clever stratagem. Muhammad Chak arrested Lohar and handed him over to the pretenders and himself promised them help against the king. Lulled thus to a false sense of security, the pretenders, forces were surprised and attacked by Muhammad Chak while they were on the way to Rajauri. Saleem was killed and Haider managed to escape with his life.

In 1576 a severe famine occurred in Kashmir which lasted for three years. The severity of the famine was so terrible that more than half the population of Kashmir was wiped off and many cases of cannibalism are recorded in the annals of the times.

Ultimately in 1579 the king while playing polo in the Id Gah grounds received a fall and the pommel of the saddle pierced his abdomen. But before he succumbed to this injury he got his son, Yusuf Shah, crowned Sultan of Kashmir.

#### YUSUF SHAH (1579-1586)

The life of Yusuf Shah Chak is as romantic as it is tragic. Born



in an environment of dynamic events, he strangely enough led a life of voluptuousness. He was an accomplished scholar and a master of music. The natural beauties of Kashmir had so bewitched him that he would spend months in roaming on its beauteous mountains and flowery meadows. He transformed Gulmarg and Sonamarg into holiday resorts. When as a result of the sudden death of his father he was called upon to assume the duties of a king, he found himself incapable of shouldering such a heavy responsibility. Neglecting the duties of the State he enjoyed his life in the company of a large number of musicians and dancing girls.

In his youth he had married a simple but romantic rustic girl Zooni, later known as Habba Khatun. She was a melodious singer and a poetess too. She wielded a great influence over the king and with her powers of sweet and silent persuasion tried to reform him and induce him to attend to his kingly duties. But before this could produce any tangible result, the people of Kashmir had lost confidence in their romance loving king, and under Muhammad Baihaqi, the wise and noble prime minister, launched a movement to force Yusuf to abdicate and leave the administration in the hands of his ministers. Yusuf Shah, however, answered their demands by an armed attack, but being unpopular with the people and the army, his efforts proved ineffective and he had to flee out of the Valley and seek shelter at Naushera, beyond the Pir Panjal pass.

For a period of six months Baihaqi assumed the rulership of the kingdom. He led a very simple and frugal life and in order to win public support, he sold the gem-studded crown and the royal parasol and distributed the money amongst the poor. He carried on the administration wisely and did his best to restore peace and tranquility to the land. Not wishing to found a dynasty of his own, he abdicated in favour of Lohar Chak who ruled for 13 months more.

Meanwhile in January, 1580, Yusuf Shah who had made some abortive attempts to regain his throne, was presented to Akbar at Agra by Raja Man Singh whose help he had sought while in exile at Lahore. The Emperor was highly pleased since he was on the look-out for an opportunity like this. Yusuf Shah formally sought Akbar's aid. A Mughal army under the command of Raja Man Singh was despatched to Kashmir. While on the way to his homeland, Yusuf was smitten with remorse at inviting the forces of Akbar to his aid. He realised that once the imperial troops landed in the Valley, the administration would be seized by the Mughals and he would be a mere puppet in their hands. Telling the Raja that it would be more discreet to hide the fact of the Mughal aid to him, he proposed that he would go

ahead alone to sound the feelings of the people in Kashmir. The proposal appealed to the Raja, and Yusuf at the head of a small band of his Kashmiri followers left for the Valley. Before reaching its outskirts he, with the help of his minister, Muhammad Bhatt, was able to enlist a small army of 4,000 from the hill tribes. He crossed the river Jhelum a few miles above Baramula avoiding a clash with the main army of his opponents. Making a rapid march he entered Srinagar triumphantly. Abdal Bhatt the intriguing minister of Lohar Chak was killed and the latter sought safety in flight. And thus after an exile of a year and half Yusuf again established himself on the throne. He hunted down ruthlessly his opponents and those who were captured were killed or mutilated mercilessly.

Meanwhile Man Singh waited in vain at Lahore for the invitation to come from Yusuf to enter Kashmir. When he was convinced of the trick played on him, he naturally harboured a sense of revenge against Yusuf. Soon, however, an opportunity presented itself to make a showdown against the latter. Yusuf Shah neglecting again the affairs of the State made it easy for his opponents to rise against him. There were serious defections among his ministers and nobles. The revolt was led by Haider Chak, but Yusuf's faithful minister, Muhammad Bhatt, suppressed the rebellion. Haider fled and took shelter with Man Singh at Lahore who in order to use him as a tool to further the imperial interests in Kashmir, bestowed upon him Bhimber and Naushera in Jagir.

#### MUGHAL INVASION

Meanwhile Akbar, who was laying his claim on Kashmir because it had been conquered by Mirza Haider Dughlat in the name of Humayun, continued to take active interest in the political developments in the kingdom. On his return from Kabul, towards the end of 1581, he sent envoys to Yusuf Shah demanding his personal homage to the Emperor. Yusuf Shah instead sent his younger son, Haider, with costly gifts to the Imperial Court. After a year Akbar sent another summons to Yusuf Shah, through his son Haider and the Kashmiri poet, Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, to present himself at the court. The demand was repeated by envoys sent by Raja Man Singh from Lahore. Yusuf Shah got frightened and this time sent his heir-apparent, prince Yaqub to the Imperial Court. But when he was presented there, Akbar became furious and complained that Yusuf was neglecting his duties as ruler and was deliberately avoiding to come and pay homage to him personally.

And, therefore, when the Emperor left for Kabul in August, 1585

to effect its settlement, he deputed two envoys from Kalanaur to Yusuf Shah, demanding his presence immediately before the Emperor. Again Yusuf Shah vacillated. The political situation worsened when Yaqub who was travelling with the Emperor's camp, escaped and reached Srinagar by a circuitous route. On hearing this the Emperor ordered an immediate invasion of Kashmir.

On December 20, 1585 a strong force of 5,000 horse under the command of Raja Bhagwan Das, marched against Kashmir from Attock *via* the Jhelum valley route. Prince Yaqub and other nobles implored Yusuf Shah to organise a stiff resistance to the Mughal invaders. The ease-loving king had, however, realised the futility of such a course against the might of the Mughal empire. But his views were not shared by his hot-headed son and the Kashmir nobles in general. And when the Mughal army reached the entrance to the Valley, it met with a stiff resistance at the hands of the Kashmir army. Yaqub with his youthful dash, pluck and organising ability, inflicted such hard blows on the benumbed foe that Bhagwan Das could make no progress and apprehending the annihilation of his forces, he opened negotiations with Yusuf Shah and his son Yaqub.

The Mughals agreed to withdraw their army completely. Yusuf Shah would retain the throne, but the coins would be struck and *Khuba* recited in the name of the Emperor. Bhagwan Das persuaded Yusuf Shah to proceed to Attock with him where, he assured him, the Emperor would bestow his kindest regards on him and also would ratify the treaty. Even though warned by his son against taking such a step, Yusuf Shah went to Attock where he was presented before the Emperor by Raja Bhagwan Das. The Emperor refused to ratify the agreement and ordered Yusuf's imprisonment. This was a violation of the agreement according to which Yusuf Shah, after paying homage to Akbar, was to return to Kashmir. Raja Bhagwan Das considered it a slight to him and with his traditional Rajput chivalry attempted to end his life by suicide. When Akbar reached Lahore, he placed Yusuf under the charge of Todar Mal. After two and a half years, on the intervention of Raja Man Singh, he was released and granted a *mansab* of 500 horse. Man Singh took him along with himself to Bihar, where pining for his beloved wife, Habba Khatun, he died in September, 1592 and was buried at Biswak in the Patna District.

Thus ended the life of one of the most cultured rulers of the Sultanate period. Fond of music, dance and poetry, Yusuf Shah was a tolerant king and abolished all exactions levied by previous rulers on non-Muslims. He did not demand *corvee* from villagers and boatmen. Though not possessed of personal valour, he displayed



dash and promptness in suppressing revolts at the time of his accession to the throne. The manner in which he recovered his throne after his first banishment, shows his skill in military strategy and diplomacy. He, however, realised early that with the rise of an imperialist power at the centre, Kashmir, in spite of its natural defences, could not hold for long its independent status, and all his attempts were devoted to avoiding bloodshed and chaos that would follow the adoption of an unrealistic attitude to an inevitable fate. But he could not convince, and convert to this view, his nobles and subjects and hence his tragic end.

#### END OF THE SULTANATE

It, however, took some more time and sufferings for the people to realise the fact which Yusuf Shah had already done. Yaqub Shah, on the withdrawal of the Mughal forces declared himself free of the obligations flowing from the agreement and struck coins in his name. He appointed Muhammad Bhatt, his father's minister, as his chief adviser. But things were again made hot for Yaqub. Given to fits of alternate rage and quietude, he neglected the duties of the State. A ruthless policy of terror was let loose against the Sunnis. A saintly and pious person, Qazi Musa, was done to death on his refusal to mention the name of Ali in all public prayers. The Sunnis though suppressed for some time rose in revolt under the leadership of an eminent theologian, poet and writer, Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi. Since the general population of the country was reduced to abject poverty, and lawlessness ruled supreme, Sarfi and his advisers thought it best to invite Akbar to Kashmir to put an end to the chronic internecine warfare. But at the same time they got an undertaking from the Emperor that Kashmir would receive a preferential treatment inasmuch as the Emperor would interfere as little as possible in the internal affairs of the State.

Assured of full support from the majority of the Kashmiris, Akbar made a third attempt at the reduction of the kingdom. An experienced and well-trained army under the command of Qasim Khan invaded Kashmir *via* the Pir Panjal pass. Guided by Haidar Chak and Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, the Mughal army met with little resistance, the wardens of the passes surrendering at its approach. It was, however, at Hira-pura that Yaqub offered some resistance, but having lost the confidence of his subjects, he had to flee and on October 14, 1586 the Mughals entered Srinagar in triumph. Kashmir thenceforth became a province of the Mughal Empire and the chapter of its long independent status came to a close.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### KASHMIR UNDER THE MUGHALS

THE MUGHALS or Mongols, inhabitants of the vast steppe-land of Central Asia, were a race of warlike nomads. Their chequered history is dominated by the exploits of the great conqueror, Changez Khan, who brought under his banner the various Mongol tribes and clans and established a vast empire extending almost all over northern Asia. The neighbouring peoples and countries stood in constant awe and dread of his untiring Mongol hordes. It was in the 13th century A.D. that the rich plains of Northern India felt the severity of Changez's scourge when he carried fire and sword to its towns and villages.

After Changez Khan the branches of the parent tree spread out in different directions. He had four sons among whom the territories of the empire were distributed. Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* writes :

“In assigning his dominions to his four sons, Changez Khan appears to have followed an ancient Mughal custom. The sons of a chief usually ruled, as their father's deputies, over certain nations or clans, and at his death each received, as an appanage, the section of the population which had been under his care. Thus the distribution was rather tribal than territorial, and the tribes, which were in most cases nomadic, sometimes shifted their abode, or were driven by enemies to migrate from one district to another.. ...”

In this way various branches of the Mughal dynasty shot forth. The Mughals who established their famous empire in India belong to the “Chaghatai branch of Mughal dynasty”, after the name of Changez's second son, Chaghatai Khan.

But in reality they were the descendants of Timur, the Central Asian Turkish king who claimed the Central Asian Mongols as his parent stock and Changez as one of his ancestors. For, the Mongols lost the purity of blood through inter-marriages with other tribes and this holds true of the ‘Mughals of India’. Writes Elias in his translation of the *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* :

“.....It will hardly be disputed that not alone Babar

himself, but some of his more immediate ancestors, were to all intents and purposes Turks ; and this was the case not only in the acquisition of language and manners, but by intermixture of blood ; while his successors whose portraits, painted in India, are extant at the present day, show no trace in their features of descent from a Mongoloid race. It is said that Babar's grandfather (Sultan Abu Said of Khorasan, 1452-67) was described by a Khiwan contemporary, who visited him, as a very handsome man with a full beard and unlike a Mughal."<sup>1</sup>

Political history of the nations of the world during various periods affords interesting comparisons in the events taking shape at some stage or the other of their socio-political evolution. India on the eve of the Mughal rule is unmistakably compared by observers with England on the eve of the rise of the Tudors. The people of both countries were smarting under the oppression of feudal lords who were heading for supremacy over one another and the king at the centre was but a puppet in their hands. India of those days was just a conglomeration of independent states with a nominal head at the centre whose jurisdiction was circumscribed within the four walls of his headquarters. For example in northern India, areas like Bengal, Bihar, Jaunpur, Kashmir, Multan, Sindh, Malwa, Gujarat, and Mewar were independent while in the Deccan there were two independent states of Bahamni and Vijaynagar. This era of medieval aristocracy of Afghans, as it is called, lasted over three centuries in India commencing from Qutb-ud-din Ibak in 1206 A.D. and culminating in 1526 when Babar the Mughal defeated the last of the Afghan rulers, Ibrahim Lodi, in the battle of Panipat. Ibrahim Lodi a cruel and inefficient king was unable to govern the country and subdue the warring feudal lords. He could not undo the wrongs committed and administrative blunders made by his predecessors from time to time. The government was theocratic. Religious heads were in the forefront of all the administrative activities. Religious persecution on the part of rulers was one of the main reasons for their losing the sympathies of the suffering people who joined hands with other disgruntled elements and rose in revolt against the existing cruelties inflicted on them. Ibrahim adopted high-handed measures to put down their risings. This further aggravated the trouble resulting in widespread discontent and unrest.

One of the most vicious legacies of this time was the Jagirdari system which continued even long after the end of the Mughal rule in India. These Jagirdars, like the barons of the pre-Tudor period

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1 Elias and Ross, *Ta rikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 79



were a source of constant menace to the ruler whom they could give a united front and dethrone and oust any moment. India at that time needed a strong central government which would put down all these warring elements and consolidate afresh the shattered fabric of a united India—politically and economically.

A change of rulers was thus the demand of the day. And with the stepping in of the energetic Mughals on the soil of India, an era of peace and plenty was ushered in. It was during the rule of the first five Mughal emperors that India saw again a political unity from the north to the south, brought about no doubt by reconciling the different elements in society.

And with this movement for the consolidation of small kingdoms and principalities into a vast empire, Kashmir could not for long retain its isolated position. Its natural beauty and strategic position attracted early the attention of Babar, the founder of the Mughal empire in India.

#### EARLIER ATTEMPTS AT CONQUEST

But even prior to Babar's victory at Panipat in 1526, Kashmir had caught the imagination of the Mughals. Timur's armies while on their march to Hindustan touched its borders. Sultan Sikandar who was then occupying the throne of Kashmir, accepted him as his liegeland and in token thereof sent costly presents in tribute. Timur accepted his homage and sent him two elephants in gift. On his way back to Samarqand, Timur overran Jammu, and while on the borders of the Valley, he—

“made enquiries about the country and city of Kashmir from men who were acquainted with it, and from them I learnt that..... Kashmir is an incomparable country.....In the midst of that country there is a very large and populous city. The rulers of the country dwell there. The buildings of the city are very large and are all of wood, and they are four or five storeys high. They are very strong and will stand for 500 or 700 years. A large river runs through the middle of the city. The inhabitants have cast bridges over the river in nearly thirty places”.<sup>1</sup>

So when Babar established his rule in northern India, he cast his longing eyes on Kashmir, which was passing through a period of political instability, misrule and religious schism. The repercussions of the victories of Babar in India were naturally felt in Kashmir too, then under the rule of a scion of Shah Mir. The general state of conditions as prevailing in the kingdom then calls for a brief mention.

<sup>1</sup> *Autobiography of Timur*, pp. 96-97.

The period covered by the Sultanate was, with the exception of the rule of Shihab-ud-din, Qutb-ub-din and Zain-ul-abidin, in no way a happy time for the people. The government, centralised in the person of the king, was weak and loose. The later Sultans particularly lacked administrative talent and were puppets in the hands of the power-hungry nobles who used them to gain their own ends, and who were busy with their feuds. The puppet Sultans were made or marred in a day. A dominant noble would at his sweet will even lift the crown off the head of the king and place it either on his own or on that of a person of his choice without the slightest hesitation or compunction. Witness, for example, the action of the powerful noble, Ghazi Chak. He accomplished the feat of this type of 'coronation' without any show of formality or shedding of even a drop of blood. Could there be a greater proof of the effeminate nature of the later rulers of this dynasty ?

With the end of the rule of the dynasty of Shah Mir, the Chaks came into power. Their rule lasted for a brief period of 25 years, when the kingdom came under the hegemony of the Imperial Mughals in 1586. The Chaks though brave fighters in the field lacked administrative and political skill, and managed to occupy the throne by sheer force of arms and intrigue. That Kashmir could retain its separate existence in the face of the rising power of the Mughals was due more to its geographical situation and the setbacks that the Mughals received under Humayun than to its political or armed strength.

Babar entered India at the invitation of Daulat Khan, Rana Sanga and others who were at loggerheads with the king of Delhi, Ibrahim Lodi, whose trouble was due largely to maladministration. In the same way the Mughals took advantage of the internal disturbances in Kashmir. With the rising tempo of Shia and Sunni conflicts in the narrow precincts of the Valley, the Mughals made early attempts to take advantage of the weak rule of Sultan Muhammad Shah (1517-28 A.D.). Babar's army, under the command of Kuchak Beg and Ali Beg marched on Kashmir ostensibly to help a pretender to the throne of Kashmir, but really to bring it under his direct rule. It was repulsed by the redoubtable fighter Kazi Chak, who placed patriotism above personal interest and power politics. Next year, however, Babar got another pretext to invade Kashmir, when a powerful but disgruntled noble sought his help to restore him to power. An efficient and compact force was deputed from Lahore and helped by the internal feuds, the Mughals easily won a victory and were induced to leave the Valley only on payment of a large ransom and tribute.

The attempt to annex Kashmir was continued by the successors of Babar. In 1531 during the reign of Humayun, Kamran (Humayun's

brother and governor of the Punjab), marched with a large army into Kashmir. The Kashmir nobles notably Chaks and Magreys mustered all their strength and presented a solid front to the invaders. A fierce battle ensued between the Mughals and the Kashmir forces under Sultan Muhammad Shah (iv) 1530-1537. The Mughals had to retreat in disorder. But a few years later (1540 A.D.) when Humayun was driven out of Delhi by the superior forces of Sher Shah Sur, Kashmir, which had resisted the more powerful armies of Babar and Kamran, came under the *de facto* rule of a handful of Mughal commanders led by Mirza Haider Dughlat.

We have already traced the rise to power of Mirza Haider under Sultan Abu Said of Kashgar and his invasion of the Valley at the head of his master's contingent of five thousand cavalrymen. They marched into Kashmir over the Zoji-la route. In the beginning they met with very little resistance and they moved on. Then a very fierce fight was given to the Mughal invaders by the Kashmiris. It resulted in great bloodshed and destruction and ultimately both sides came to terms. Mirza Haider describes the event :

"The Government of Kashmir was, at that time, conducted in the name of Muhammad Shah. Among the Maliks of Kashmir, after Ali Mir, who was killed (in an engagement with us), there were Abdal Makri, Kazi Chak, Lahur Makri and Yak Chak. When terms of peace were proposed they were very thankful, but they did not credit (our good faith), wondering how people who had once conquered such a beautiful country, could be so senseless as to give it up.

"In a word the *Khutba* was read and coins were struck in the exalted name of the Khan. The revenue of Kashmir, which was due to the Mughals, we took. One of Muhammad Shah's daughters was wedded to Iskandar Sultan. And everyone, according to his rank, formed a connection (*mulakat*) with one of the Sultans or Maliks of Kashmir. I, for example, became connected with Muhammad Shah, and in accordance with the Mughal practice we called each other "friend". Similar (relations) were established between Mir Daim Ali and Abdal Makri ; Mirza Ali Taghai and Lahur Makri ; Baba Sarik Mirza and Kazi Chak ; my uncle's son Mahmud Mirza and Yak Chak. Numerous presents and offerings were interchanged."<sup>1</sup>

Mirza Haider and his army returned leaving behind them a trail of misery and destruction in the form of derelict, hungry and uprooted

1 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, English translation. p. 441.



population. Mirza Dughlat, however, left the service of Kashgar rulers on the death of Abu Said, and joined Humayun, who was a close relation of his. Here another opportunity presented itself to the Mirza to bring Kashmir under the direct rule of Humayun.

Sultan Shams-ud-din II (1537-38) who came to the throne of Kashmir was, as usual, under the domination of the powerful noble who shaped the fate of the Sultans of this period—Kaji Chak. He was the virtual ruler except for the title. His highhandedness embittered the feelings of the people and the Magreys were busy intriguing against him. This state of affairs continued for a few years until the reign of Sultan Ismail Shah II (1538-40) when dissension again set in among the nobles of Kashmir. The Magreys appealed to Mirza Haider for help against the Chaks and Haider advised Humayun to seize this opportunity and conquer Kashmir.

But Humayun was at that time facing a stiff opposition from the armies of Sher Shah Sur, who ultimately forced him to flee from Agra to Lahore. While there Mirza Dughlat proposed that Humayun along with his harem and devoted followers proceed to Kashmir and set up the nucleus of his government there, but Kamran did not agree. Later, however, when the Afghan forces of Sher Shah became more aggressive and Humayun had to abandon Lahore, he asked Mirza Dughlat to proceed to Kashmir with a small force and secure the Valley for him.

Mirza Haider writes :

“At the time when the general assemblage took place in Lahur, Haji carried many messages to and fro, between myself on the one hand and Abdal Makri on the other, in furtherance of my plan. All terminated in a most desirable way, and I was thus able to impress it strongly on the Emperor. I showed him the letter which had been sent me, and he became convinced that Kashmir would be conquered as soon as I should appear there.”

So the Mirza advanced into Kashmir and helped by Magrey conquered it with ease. True to his master he neither installed himself as the ruler of Kashmir, nor thought it expedient to declare Humayun as the overlord, as the latter had virtually lost such a position. Instead he installed Nazuk Shah of Kashmir as the Sultan under, of course, his regency. Haider deserves credit for this act of sagacity and fidelity.

Some territories were added to Kashmir. In the beginning Mirza Haider endeavoured to undo the wrongs caused by the constant feuds and religious persecution which had become the bane of Kashmir for nearly a century. It must have certainly been very difficult for the

Mirza to do much in this direction in a short time as centuries-old evils could not be done away with in decades. Nevertheless, he did try to raise the economic condition of the people which was fast deteriorating. But while trying to set up orthodox practices in religion, he ruthlessly suppressed the followers of the Shia faith, who were mostly the Chaks, his political opponents. Matters came to such a pass that the Mirza had to face a strong opposition and lost his life in one of the skirmishes.

Mirza Dughlat's exit from the scene marks the end of the rule of Shah Mir's dynasty and beginning of the rise of the Chaks to power. During their brief rule the kingdom witnessed a general deterioration in the political and economic condition of the people, and outbursts of religious frenzy. The Chaks were great fighters but lacked political wisdom. As administrators they were very weak. The Mughal attempts to conquer Kashmir were helped by the deteriorating internal condition of the Kingdom and Akbar who had already subjugated the surrounding territories took advantage of this weakness. Kashmir fell into his hands as a result of something short of fair military conquest and some of his actions in this drama are not above reproach. Forster, a traveller who visited the Valley two centuries later observes :

"Akbar subdued it; aided more, it is said, by intrigue, than the force of his arms. Kashmir remained annexed to the house of Timur for the space of one hundred and sixty years.. ."

The handle to extend his influence was supplied by the Sunni-Shia conflict raging in Kashmir under the Chak Sultans. They presented petitions and appeals for aid to the Emperor at Agra, and Akbar entertained and received well the deputations of Kashmiris that waited on him from time to time. He promised active support to them with the ultimate aim, of course, of conquering the kingdom. His personal interest in the sorry state of Kashmir affairs became marked during the reign of Hussain Shah Chak (1563-1570) when internal dissension was at its highest. He deputed his envoys to Kashmir to make an enquiry into the trouble. The Sultan received them well and offered them presents and agreed to give his own daughter in marriage to Akbar's son Salim. But Akbar who was enraged at the persecution of the Sunnis and the delay in the conquest of Kashmir, could not be appeased by even such a humble gesture. He refused the presents of Hussain Shah and his daughter. This insult is said to have shocked the Sultan to death. Later in the reign of Hussain Shah's brother, Ali Shah Chak, the presents and Hussain Shah's daughter were accepted but only when the Sultan recognised Akbar as his overlord. The Mughal attempts at conquest continued till the year 1586, when Raja Bhagwan Dass and other generals

were commanded by Akbar to march into Kashmir. Akbar did not personally march at the head of his army, but sent his trusted men to accomplish the deed. Kashmir was then ruled by the ease-loving king Yusuf Shah Chak who being a weak ruler could not keep in check his warring nobles or suppress the Sunni-Shia conflicts of which the people were very much tired. Helped by the inclemency of weather and the natural defences, the Kashmir forces succeeded in halting the advance of the mighty but cumbrous Mughal army. The Mughal general Baghwan Dass appealed to Yusuf Shah Chak to come to terms. Yusuf Shah agreed and was invited to the Mughal camp. He went in good faith, was taken to the imperial court, only to be imprisoned. In the meantime his son Yaqub Khan came to the vacant throne.

During Yaqub's reign, there was still greater unrest due to religious persecution of the Sunnis. The people could no longer stand this cruelty and some leading persons like Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, an eminent scholar of his time, and Baba Daud Khaki headed a deputation to the Mughal court. They apprised the Emperor of the situation in the kingdom. He promised to redress the grievances of the oppressed people. They got assurance from the monarch that their basic rights and demands would be upheld. They were assured of religious freedom and freedom in their internal affairs. There would be no forced labour as was prevalent in Kashmir for centuries. They were assured that the nobles who brought ruin to the Sultans of Kashmir, would no longer be tolerated in the Mughal regime.

This was a tempting invitation and a welcome offer which Akbar would not miss. So disgusted were the people with the weak and inefficient rule of the kings that they preferred a strong rule from the Centre, even though it meant the loss of their independent but isolated position. They were not disappointed, as the advent of the Mughal rule ushered in an era of peace and prosperity.

Akbar sent his general Qasim Khan in the year 1586 to invade Kashmir. Yaqub Khan, the last Chak Sultan took flight as his ranks got depleted by wholesale desertion of his followers.

Though Qasim Khan had won the day and occupied the capital, he was not left in peace. It took a long time to effect the pacification of Kashmir and the suppression of the resistance offered by the Kashmiris to Mughal domination.

#### RESISTANCE FROM KASHMIRIS

Yaqub Shah, as we have seen, had fled to Kishtwar at the defeat of his forces by Qasim Khan, but the Raja of that principality,



Bahadur Singh, who was his father-in-law, did not approve of his giving in till the last. Taunted by Bahadur, he returned to the Valley and collecting a number of devoted followers, launched a surprise raid on the forces of Qasim Khan, who were by then feeling uncomfortable with the advent of winter. Meanwhile Shams Chak, another powerful scion of his dynasty was contesting every inch of the territory occupied by the Mughals. Yaqub's small army from the south and Shams' from the north of Srinagar had thus taken the benumbed Mughal forces between the prongs of a vice which was being tightened every moment.

From Yaqub Shah's headquarters at Chandrakot and Shams Chak's seat at Sopore, small parties of raiders would make surprise attacks on the Mughals in the city and carry off their rations and equipment. Qasim, in order to end this menace, sent a strong contingent against Yaqub at Chandrakot, but the latter learning of this in advance, moved down to launch an attack on the Mughal headquarters at Srinagar. A bloody battle ensued and Qasim had to abandon the palace, which was reoccupied by Yaqub. Elated at this success against the mighty Mughals, Yaqub ordered the execution of Hussain Khan who had been proclaimed as king by a section of the rebels at Hirapur. Yaqub committed another act of indiscretion. He announced that he would kill all those who had deserted him in the battle against Qasim when he initially invaded Kashmir. This at once alienated some of the more influential lords who became apprehensive of meeting a dire fate at Yaqub's hands.

Learning of these serious defections in Yaqub's camp, Qasim launched a strong counter-offensive and Yaqub had to flee again for his life.

By that time the winter had taken the Valley in its cold grip, and both Yaqub and Shams Chak repaired to their places of refuge—the former to Kishtwar and the latter to the hills of Karnah. The less important nobles like Hussain Khan and Muhammad Bhatt, thinking the resistance to the might of Akbar futile, surrendered to Qasim who, after giving an assurance of pardon and personal safety, sent them to the court of Akbar at Agra.

In the spring of 1887, the fighting was resumed. Yaqub returning from Kishtwar set up his headquarters near Avantipura, to the south-east of Srinagar and Shams Chak occupied Sopore again. For some time daily skirmishes were taking place in the city and the Mughal army was practically besieged in their barracks. Ultimately Qasim Khan came out in full force against Yaqub but suffered a reverse. Encouraged by

this victory Shams Chak also moved nearer to Srinagar and encamped at Hanjik to the west of the city.

QASIM KHAN now moved out in person against Yaqub and encountering him near the hill of Sankaracarya, inflicted a defeat on him. Yaqub had to flee for his life, but being a hard nut to crack, he approached Shams Chak for an alliance against the Mughals. Shams readily agreed and both of them launched a severe attack on Qasim Khan's forces, inflicting a crushing defeat on him.

Taking shelter behind the fortifications of the city, the Mughal army was subjected to relentless pressure by the Kashmiris. They carried out night attacks on the city itself in which they took away their horses, equipment and supplies. Qasim Khan became very much dejected and submitted a petition to the Emperor, requesting him to send an abler commander to replace him, admitting thereby his failure in pacifying the province.

Akbar, thereupon, despatched a strong army under the command of Yusuf Khan Rizvi with two Kashmiri nobles, Baba Khalil and Muhammad Bhatt, to guide and assist him in the reduction and administration of the Valley.

Learning of the march of a mighty force to reinforce the Mughal army in Kashmir, Yaqub planned an attack on it in a defile near the Pir Panjal pass. But most of his followers had by then realized that the might of Mughal Imperialism was too much for them and it was therefore prudent to discretely lay down their arms. This demoralised the rest of Yaqub's followers and thus the Kashmiri resistance forces were completely disintegrated. Yaqub went in disgust to Kishtwar, while Shams Chak retired to the hills in Karnah.

YUSUF RIZVI was a clever diplomat and an able administrator. He adopted a policy of conciliation and won over many chiefs. Against Shams Chak he sent a strong force which defeated his followers and compelled him to retire to the hills. Another force was sent against Yaqub who had meantime come back from Kishtwar. Yaqub made a brave stand against the Mughal forces, but finding defections rampant in his camp, he again escaped to Kishtwar. Thereupon Shams Chak surrendered to the Mughals, having become convinced that it was futile to put up a fight against the superior forces of the Mughal Emperor.

#### YAQUB SURRENDERS AT LAST

It was only in 1589, on Akbar's first visit to the Valley, that Yaqub Shah decided to give up the struggle and submit. Accordingly he returned from Kishtwar and towards the end of July paid personal

homage to Akbar, who pardoned him and sent him to Raja Man Singh at Rohtas. Here he was kept a virtual prisoner lest he escape again and create trouble for the Mughals in Kashmir. On his father, Yusuf Shah's death, Man Singh transferred his rank to him and allowed him to draw the allowance from his Jagir. While proceeding to his Jagir, he was offered poisoned betel leaves by Qasim Khan who claimed to be a son of Yusuf Shah Chak, and Yaqub's brother. He ate the leaves and by the time he reached Behira in Bihar, he died (Oct. 1593). His body was carried to Biswak and buried there near the grave of his father, Yusuf Shah.

With all opposition crushed effectively, the imperial rule of the Mughals was ushered in with the first visit of Emperor Akbar to the Valley in the summer of 1589. Says Dr. Stein :

"Akbar's conquest marks the commencement of modern history of Kashmir ..... Though the conservative instinct of the population was bound to maintain much of the old traditions and customs, yet the close connection with a great empire and the free intercourse with other territories subject to it necessarily transformed in many ways the political and economic situation of the country."

The people enjoyed a fresh quantum of peace and goodwill after the rigours of medieval rule characterised by oppression, maladministration and unrest. No doubt Sultan Zain-ul-abidin's glorious reign was an exception but generally the condition of the people was all but happy under the rule of the previous kings.

#### KASHMIR BECOMES A MUGHAL PROVINCE

The Mughals ushered in an era of expansion, consolidation and construction. The "Subah of Cashmeer," records Abul Fazl in the *Ain-i-Akbari*, "composed of Kashmir, Pakhli, Bhimber, Swat, Bijore, Qandahar, and Zabulistan", with Kabul as its capital. It became part and parcel of the vast Mughal empire, and shook off the centuries-old isolation and seclusion. Its natural beauty attracted people from all over Asia. It was a great highway of Central Asian trade which flourished during this period. The Mughals were great builders and administrators. They paved the way for national unity by following a policy of secularism and consolidated India into an organic whole by introducing a sound pattern of administration. Sir Jadhunath Sarkar enumerates the salient features of their rule in India thus :

- "(a) The uniform administrative type throughout the Subhas;
- (b) one official language ; (c) one uniform system of coinage ;



(d) an all-India cadre of higher public services, the officers being transferred from province to province every three or four years ;  
 (e) the frequent march of large armies from province to province and ; (f) deputation of inspecting officers from the central capital."

The Subha of Kashmir was placed under the control of a Subhedar appointed by the Central Government. He was answerable to the Centre for any lapse in administration. True, the pattern of the Mughal administration was unit-wise and each unit was controlled by the concerned head and the work of administration was thus conducted smoothly, but the Subhedar had to follow a uniform code of administration and law set up by the Centre. Accordingly the Subha of Kashmir like other Subhas comprised a good number of Sirkars, each under the control of a person called the Kotwal. The Kotwal had to look after law and order, public welfare, sanitation, etc., in his assigned area. The officer in charge of the collection of revenue in the Sirkar was called the Mansebdar. Besides, he administered justice. But criminal cases were very rare. According to the *Ain-i-Akbari*, 'although Cashmeer is populous, and money scarce, yet a thief or a beggar is scarcely known amongst them.'

The Mughal Subhedars deputed to Kashmir, with the exception of a few, were good administrators and looked after the welfare of the people, particularly as the Mughal emperors who often visited Kashmir took special interest in this Subha and its people. They were enamoured of its charm and glamour. All the Mughal emperors craved earnestly for the welfare of the people of Kashmir. Bernier writes : "It is not indeed without reason that the Mughals call *Kachemire* the terrestrial paradise of the *Indies* or that *Ekbar* was so unremitting in his efforts to wrest the sceptre from the hands of its native prince. His son *Jehanguyre* became so enamoured of this little kingdom as to make it the place of his favourite abode, and he often declared that he would rather be deprived of every other province of his mighty empire than lose *Kachemire*." Enjoying a privileged position the people of Kashmir gradually grew to be conscious of their rights and even a slight grievance of theirs would arrest the attention of the Central Government forthwith. In this connection George Forster who visited Kashmir in 1783 writes :

"The interests of this province were so strongly favoured at the court, that every complaint against its governors was attentively listened to, and any attempt to molest the people restrained or punished."



### AKBAR

Akbar's reign over Kashmir lasted 19 years. During his reign Kashmir was ruled by four Subhedars. Chronologically they were :

Mirza Qasim, 1586-1587 ;  
Mirza Yusuf Khan Rizvi, 1587-1590 ;  
Muhammad Qulich Khan, 1590-1601 ; and  
Mirza Ali Akbar, 1601-1606.

We have seen that Mirza Qasim's regime of one year as the Subhedar of Kashmir passed in facing armed opposition from Yaqub Shah and Shams Chak. He had thus no time or opportunity to conduct a smooth administration. It was only under Yusuf Khan Rizvi that the Mughal institutions in administration were introduced.

The people were happy under him. Yusuf Rizvi engaged himself in undoing the evils of the past regime and subduing the last remnants of the warring elements which were still present in the province. Two years after its conquest, Akbar personally visited Kashmir. This visit was not merely for pleasure but had deep significance in so far as he studied the political and administrative set-up of the Subha and took personal cognizance of the people's wishes and demands. The Emperor was hailed by the people of all communities, young and old, with joy. His presence at a time when the people had just emerged from the lean centuries of distress and discord, warmed up their hearts with new hopes and promises. The contemporary chronicler Suka gives an eyewitness account of the event in these words :

"Now Jyalaladina came to see the kingdom of Kashmira adorned with saffron, walnut, fruits and flowers. The wives of the citizens hastened to see the king. One woman pointed out the king to her beloved female friend who was anxious to see him ; another exclaimed with a flutter that she had seen that leader of the army ; another woman with threats to her child (who wanted to drink of her milk) covered her breast and went (to have a view of the king). After the people of Kashmir had seen the sovereign, a continuous festivity was held in every house."<sup>1</sup>

The Emperor made a signal announcement at the very outset, assuring the people that he would redress all their grievances. He graciously abolished all distinction based on religious sentiment. In the time of the Chak rulers, the Sunnis were persecuted and the Brahmans could perform their religious practices on payment of taxes, fines and other tributes. Akbar removed these innocuous exactions and thus

established practically the brotherhood of man. In this connection Suka records :

“.....For the preservation of his sacred thread a Brahmana annually paid a tribute of forty *panas* to the king..... Now when king Jyalaladina learnt of the condition of the Brahmanas, he repealed the practice of levying fines on them, which had prevailed since the time of the kings of the house of Chakka. He announced that he would without delay reward those who would respect the Brahmanas in Kashmira, and that he would instantly pull down the houses of those who would take the annual tribute from them.....”

The presence of the Mughal soldiers in the city was very much resented by the people. These soldiers caused great distress to them, harassing and insulting them at every turn. This came to the notice of Akbar who ordered a new town to be constructed, away from the civilian population, where his soldiers and attendants would dwell. The chosen site was the Hari Parbat hillock where the town was built. It was called Nagar Nagar and was white-washed and very well decorated. The place presented a sharp contrast to the existing capital which, as ill luck would have it, got burnt as soon as the new town was formally occupied by the Emperor's soldiers. The people were however a good deal relieved of the inconvenience caused by the soldiers. In the words of Suka : “When the Yavanas had gone out of the old city the people had a festivity ; they always blessed king Jyalladina, and were happy.”

Nor was this all. The Emperor announced that no soldiers would inflict any loss on the cultivators and there are instances when the Mughal Subhedars under the direction of the Emperor took severe action against those who harassed or in any way disturbed the peace of the Valley.

On one occasion Mirza Laskara the son of Yusuf Khan saw a soldier putting people to trouble. He at once ordered that the soldier be arrested forthwith. His men failed to trace out the culprit. But in order to strike terror in the minds of others so as an incident like this might not be repeated, he ordered a boat laden with logs to be set on fire in the middle of the river Jhelum. This action certainly told well in so far as the people were struck with fear and awe, thinking that he had burnt the culprit alive in the boat.

Akbar's first visit to Kashmir produced some notable results. It was, for instance, at his suggestion that some of the boats in the Valley were transformed into residential boats very nearly resembling the



modern house-boat. He gave a fillip to several industries, particularly to shawl manufacture. After spending six weeks in the Valley, Akbar left by the Baramula route. Mirza Yusuf Khan, the governor of Kashmir accompanied the Emperor to Agra. His cousin, Mirza Yadgar, was kept in charge of the new province.

#### NEW REVENUE ASSESSMENT RESENTED

While in Kashmir, Akbar found that the revenue assessment of the Valley was not in line with that prevailing in the rest of India. Consequently, he thought, the state revenues fell far short of the paying capacity of the Kashmiris.

Mirza Yusuf Khan had already reported that the assessment which he had proposed was too high. But he sent two officials, Qazi Nur Ullah and Qazi Ali, to investigate the question and to carry out revenue settlement of the Valley on the lines of Todarmal. On reaching Kashmir, they found the local officials unco-operative and the people sullen. They could not carry out their settlement and complained to the Emperor against the officiating governor, Mirza Yadgar and his subordinates. Akbar, thereupon, sent two more officials Hassan Beg and Sheikh Umra to assist Qazi Ali in his work.

Since very early times the whole of the land in Kashmir was considered as the property of the ruler. Some portions of the *Khalsa* land were granted in Jagir for various periods. "Although formerly the Government was said to take only a third of the produce of the soil, yet in fact the husbandman was not left in the enjoyment of near one-half." Qazi Ali confiscated all the Jagirs and overrating the State's share of the produce, raised the assessment to more than half of the produce. He moreover fixed the pay and emoluments of the officials and soldiers in cash, as against the prevailing custom of making payment in kind (grain). The new assessment was resented by the Kashmiri nobles as well as by the Mughal soldiers posted in the Valley. The Mughal officials and military commanders were convinced that if the Centre persisted in levying revenue at enhanced rates, little or nothing would be left for them and their troops and encouraged by personal jealousies between Mirza Yadgar and Qazi Ali, they rose in arms and elected as their leader Mirza Yadgar, the governor's cousin, who assumed the royal title and caused the *Khutba* to be recited in his own name. Qazi Ali and Hassan Beg, who were forced to flee, were attacked by the rebels. Qazi Ali lost his life while fighting on the outskirts of the Valley but Hassan Beg managed to escape and reaching Agra narrated the sad tale to the Emperor.

To nip the mischief in the bud, Akbar immediately despatched three strong army contingents to suppress the revolt. Zain Khan led his army through the Jhelum valley and Sadiq Khan over the Tosamaidan pass. The third force was despatched *via* Jammu. Not content with having taken these strong measures, Akbar decided to proceed to Kashmir in person. A strong army was mobilised and on July 3, 1592, the Emperor left Lahore for Kashmir by the Pir Panjal route. At Bhimber he learnt that the forces which he had sent in advance had dispersed the rebels at the foot of the pass and that the imperial cavalcade could now safely cross into the Valley. Mirza Yadgar, mustering a small force, was planning an attack on the Mughal forces at Hirapur, but most of his commanders deserted to the imperial side. He was captured and put to death and his head was presented to the Emperor, who advanced and, on October 14, entered Srinagar. Mirza Yusuf Khan resigned professing himself unable to administer the province under the enhanced assessment, and the whole province was, therefore, classed as crown land and was placed under the charge of Khwaja Shams-uddin, who had charge of the finances of the Punjab.

While in Kashmir, Akbar held a grand *Durbar* and distributed in alms the gold and silver with which he had had himself weighed. Thousands were fed at his expense for a number of days. He dealt heavy punishment to the insurgents, and bestowed riches and rank on those who had remained loyal to him during Yadgar's rebellion. To strengthen his hold on Kashmir, he married a daughter of Shams Chak, and his son Salim, took a daughter of Hussain Chak into his harem.

Due to the misgovernment of the kingdom by the Chak rulers, the plight of the people was pitiable. To give employment to the poor and starving people, Akbar ordered the construction of a bastion wall round the Hari Parbat hill, and also a palace and a city inside the fortifications.

The settlement of land and assessment of revenue was entrusted to Todar Mal. Previously Qazi Ali had fixed the revenue at 30,63,050 *Kharwars*. Todar Mal fixed the revenue at 30,79,543 *Kharwars*, out of which 10,153,301 *Kharwars* were to be paid in cash. "Although", writes Abul Fazal, "this settlement exceeds that of Qazi Ali, but calculating at the present rate, the amount to be collected is actually less by 8,60,342 *dams* because the Qazi overrated the money *Kharwar*."

After staying in the Valley for more than three months during which he visited several health resorts and saw the saffron in blossom, Akbar left *via* the Jhelum valley route. From Srinagar he went by boat to Baramula, passing over the Wular lake and feasting in the island-

palace of Zain-ul-abidin. Apart from strengthening his hold on the Valley, this visit afforded the Emperor a clearer picture of the economic possibilities of his newly-acquired territory and also the cultural heritage of its inhabitants. Akbar and his successors who were great patrons of art and literature thenceforth held the Kashmiris in great respect.

#### QULI KHAN AS GOVERNOR

On his arrival at Lahore, Akbar appointed MUHAMMAD QULI KHAN as the governor of Kashmir. The new governor found still some live embers of rebellion among the scions of the Chak dynasty and influential nobles. Moreover, the people in general, though having peaceful times, had not yet taken to the overlordship of the Imperial Mughals. Quli Khan hence adopted a policy of ruthless suppression of unruly elements, and the conciliation of peace-loving subjects. The Chaks who had not yet reconciled themselves to Akbar's overlordship were his special targets of punishment. He did not spare even Shams Chak and Hussain Chak whose daughters were taken by Akbar and Salim in marriage, and when they showed signs of unrest and rebellion, had them beheaded by the soldiers of Mulla Jamil.

Quli Khan supervised the building of the great wall round Hari Parbat and the royal palace. The city inside the wall was also growing fast. More than two hundred skilled workers were sent from India and the total cost of the construction came to one crore and ten lakh rupees (Akbarshahi). The local labour was paid well and no *corvee* was levied.

When after eight years the fort and the new palace were completed, Quli Khan invited the Emperor to pay a third visit to Kashmir. In July, 1598 Akbar arrived in Srinagar via the Pir Panjal pass after visiting the famous health resorts of the southern district of the Valley. Father Jerome Xavier, a Navarese of high birth, and Benoist de Gois the first Europeans to visit Kashmir, accompanied Akbar this time. Short sketches of the Kashmiri people were recorded by Father Xavier which were published in Antwerp in 1605. It appears that the Valley was then in the grip of a severe famine. Harrowing tales of the devastation and misery resulting from this calamity were recorded by the Portuguese Priest Pierre du Jarric in his interesting account of Akbar and his court.

#### THE GREAT FAMINE

The severity of famine was aggravated by the influx of Akbar's large retinue. The Emperor, however, did all in his power to institute



relief measures. Thousands of maunds of foodgrains were imported from Pakhli, Bhimber and Western Punjab. Nearly a lakh of people were fed daily in the Idgah. Huge public works by way of building forts, roads and canals were undertaken to provide employment to the starving population. Fortunately the crop that year was abundant and the famine conditions abated.

The Emperor inaugurated the new city and named it Nagar Nagar. There were several luxurious palaces in the city. To celebrate the inauguration of Nagar Nagar and also the end of the famine, Akbar participated in the festivities connected with the birthday of the Vitasta in the same manner as Zain-ul-abidin used to do. On the thirteenth of the bright fortnight of Bhadun, both the banks of the river were illuminated with thousands of tiny lamps and the king went out on the river in a luxurious barge specially made for the occasion. The hills round Srinagar and the houses, illuminated with lamps and torches, afforded a picturesque scene. At the end of the festivities the Emperor held a *Durbar*.

#### SUBJUGATION OF LADAKH

It was during Akbar's third visit to Kashmir that he seriously planned to bring Ladakh and Baltistan under his rule. But since Kashmir was passing through a time of severe famine, and there were not enough food reserves to last for the duration of the campaign, the invasion was not mounted, and instead Akbar sent his envoys to the Raja of Ladakh to accept his suzerainty. But before the envoys could reach Leh the capital of Ladakh, the Chief of Baltistan, Ali Rai, in conjunction with the chief minister of Ladakh, Aju Raj, brought Ladakh under his subjugation. This incensed the Emperor and calling a reinforcement of three thousand cavalry and five hundred musketeers from Lahore, ordered an attack on Ali Rai. On the approach of the Mughal forces the chief took to his heels and without firing a shot Baltistan and Ladakh were occupied by the Mughals.

With the advent of winter Akbar and his retinue left for the warmer plains of India after spending more than three months in the Valley. In 1601 he recalled Muhammad Quli Khan who had put in eleven years of service as the governor of Kashmir.

Quli Khan under whom Kashmir was completely pacified, was succeeded by MIRZA ALI AKBAR. The latter had not much to do by way of reform, the line and pattern of administration having already been set by Quli Khan. Under Ali Akbar, however, there were several unfortunate outbreaks of epidemics and the Valley was devastated by famines

and floods which occurred frequently. The Emperor, however, sent supplies of grain from Lahore and Sialkot which mitigated their severity. It was in Ali Akbar's fourth year of governorship that the Emperor Akbar breathed his last in 1605 A.D.

### JEHANGIR

Jehangir who succeeded his father Akbar, had fallen in love with the natural beauty of Kashmir since the day he paid his first visit to the Valley in the company of his father in 1589. A great Mughal par excellence, he was at the same time a man of scholarly habits and a lover of natural beauty. A spirit of scientific enquiry, though cramped by the empirical knowledge of the middle ages characterised his principal pastime, namely observation and collection of flora and fauna.

Jehangir had a number of sojourns in Kashmir. The primary object was undoubtedly that of health or as the Irish poet Thomas Moore puts it in the *Lalla Rookh*, to fly "from power and pomp, and the trophies of war". But this also enabled the monarch to indulge in his love of nature, to feast his eyes and to quench his thirst for knowledge. Some of the florid passages in his memories, *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*, record the beauties of the Valley of Kashmir. For instance—

"If one were to take to praise Kashmir, whole books would have to be written. Accordingly a mere summary will be recorded.

"Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring, or an iron fort to a palace of kings—a delightful flower-bed, and heart-expanding heritage for *dervishes*. Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description. There are running streams and fountains beyond count. Wherever the eye reaches, there are verdure and running water. The red rose, the violet, and the narcissus grow of themselves ; in the fields, there are all kinds of flowers and all sorts of sweet-scented herbs more than can be calculated. In the soul enchanting spring the hills and plains are filled with blossoms ; the gates, the walls, the courts, the roofs are lighted up by the torches of banquet-adorning tulips. What shall we say of these things or of the wide meadows and the fragrant trefoil ?"

Jehangir and his versatile queen visited Kashmir several times and spent the hot summer months in its delightfully cool valleys and mountain meadows. His presence naturally prevented any abuse of power by the governors who administered the kingdom. For Kashmiris Jehangir's reign is synonymous with justice and fair play. He would

personally look into the grievances and demands of the people and pass suitable orders on the spot. MIRZA ALI AKBAR the last governor under Akbar's rule, continued to occupy the post for three years after Jehangir's accession to the throne. He was followed by five incumbents of the office, namely, HASHAM KHAN (1609-12), SARDAR KHAN (1612-15), AHMED BEG (1615-18), DILAWAR KHAN (1618-20), IRADAT KHAN (1620-22), and ITQAD KHAN (1622-33).

Excepting for the last governor, Itqad Khan, all others were broadminded and lovable persons. They conducted the administration of the province efficiently and carefully looked after the well-being of the people.

#### PLAGUE AND FIRE

It was during the governorship of AHMAD BEG in 1615 that an epidemic of plague broke out in a virulent form. In a few days thousands of people died in the Valley. There was no remedy then available to combat it, and the epidemic subsided by itself after a few weeks.

Another calamity fell on the people when more than 12,000 houses were destroyed in a conflagration in Srinagar. The Jama Masjid which was also reduced to ashes was rebuilt at State expense.

The period of DILAWAR KHAN's governorship, though very brief, is notable for the laying out of gardens and building of palaces and pavilions. His name is still borne by a garden in the heart of the city of Srinagar, on the banks of a lagoon formed by the backwaters of the Dal lake.

#### CONQUEST OF KISHTWAR

Kishtwar which was still maintaining an independant status was conquered during Dilawar Khan's governorship. He marched on the principality with a large army. The remnants of the Chak leaders and forces had made Kishtwar their headquarters, and they still cherished the dreams of reoccupying Kashmir and establishing their rule there. Dilawar Khan was aided by his sons Jamal, Jalal, Hassan, and his brother Haibat. While Dilwar Khan led the main force against the Raja, Jamal, Jalal and Haibat marched on from different directions. A fierce fight ensued and one of the Chak leaders named Aiba Chak who was fighting ferociously on the side of the Raja was killed in action. The Raja was defeated and made prisoner, and brought before the emperor in Srinagar. The emperor was highly pleased with Dilawar Khan's exploits and expressed his appreciation by granting him one year's



revenue from Kishtwar in reward. On his return to Agra in the autumn of 1620, he took Dilawar Khan along with himself, appointing Iradat Khan in his place.

IRADAT KHAN followed the fashion of the times in laying out a delightful garden on the outskirts of Srinagar.

Jehangir, the great lover of natural beauty as he was, could not but come under the spell of Kashmir. Wherever he found a hill coming down gently to a spring or a grove of chenars, or a beautiful lake, he utilized the place for planting a pleasure garden. He took to the systematic planting of the *Char Chenari* or a chenar tree planted at each of the ordinal points so as to produce shade at whichever point the sun may be. The massing of flowers, the construction of miniature pleasure houses entirely subservient to the garden design, and constructed right across the water channel through which the spring water was drawn, was the chief plan of the garden adopted by him.

Shalamar and Nishat, laid out on the slopes of the mountain coming down on the eastern bank of the charming Dal lake are perhaps the best gift from the Mughals to the people of the Valley.

The Shalamar garden was laid out by the emperor in the year 1619. The Nishat Bagh was laid out by Nur Jehan's brother Asaf Khan. The famous springs of Verinag and Achhabal, with their natural gushing waters were dressed up by the Mughals who gave fine artistic shape to these natural objects. In 1620 Jehangir got an "octagonal tank of sculptured stones" made round the spring at Verinag. Nur Jehan was similarly attracted by another spring, at Achhabal, six miles from Anantnag. A beautiful garden with fruit trees and running fountains was laid out by her near the spring. The garden was called "Begamabad" and also "Sahibabad".

Jehangir was not, however, carried off his feet by the natural attractions of Kashmir. He was equally moved by the suffering and pain brought on human beings by Man himself or by Nature. He set himself to the task of stamping out pernicious customs of Sati, infanticide, forced conversions among either community and the like. In some areas of the kingdom the Muslim ladies like their Hindu sisters used to end their lives at the death of their husbands. They were buried alive along with the dead bodies just as the Hindu widows burnt themselves on the funeral pyre of their husbands. Girl babies were killed at their birth. Such heartless and cruel customs touched the soft chord of the emperor's heart. He forthwith put a stop to these inhuman practices. It was reported to him that in some hilly parts there existed the custom of inter-mrrriages between Hindus and Muslims. A Hindu could marry

a Muslim girl and vice versa. Jehangir did not approve of it, and he prohibited the marriage of a Muslim girl to a Hindu. Some of the iniquitous taxes like the Rasum-i-Faujdari were also abolished by him. No wonder the country flourished under Jehangir. The revenue from the province rose to 7,46,70,000 *dams*, a sure sign of the prosperity of the people.

ITQAD KHAN, who occupied the gubernatorial chair for more than eleven years was a cruel tyrant, and his harsh treatment of the people marred the otherwise golden record of Jehangir's rule in Kashmir. He instituted some exacting levies, as for instance, free supply of fruit to government officials, provision of free labour by villagers for carrying the luggage of the governor and his retinue, etc. Above all he tyrannised over the Shia sect. He struck such awe among the people that they dared not complain against him to the emperor.

It was during his time that in 1627 Jehangir paid his last visit to Kashmir. He had been ailing for some months and had come to the Valley to recoup his health. When the summer was nearly over he was advised to move down to the warmer plains of India. Reluctantly he accepted the advice, but on reaching Behramgala the disease took a serious turn and on 7th November, 1627 he breathed his last. While on his death-bed he had expressed the wish that his body be carried back to Verinag and buried there. But it was not thought expedient and instead he was buried at Lahore. The poet has feelingly rendered the scene in the following Persian stanza:

*Az Shah-i-Jehangir dame naz'a chu justand  
Ba khwahish-i-dil guft ki Kashmir digar hich.*

When at the time of death Jehangir was asked what he desired, With the desire of heart he replied—"Kashmir and nothing else."

### SHAH JEHAN

Jehangir was succeeded by his son, Shah Jehan, who ruled from 1627 to 1658. The emperor took a greater interest in the welfare of Kashmir than his father. He paid several visits to the Valley and the beauty of Kashmir's lakes and rivers, its mountain meadows and springs fascinated him. He developed a soft corner in his heart for the inhabitants of the Happy Valley and looked after them with loving care. A great builder as he was, he has left his memory in the several gardens, mosques and *serai's* which were built under his directions in Kashmir.

Under Shah Jehan Kashmir was ruled by nine governors in succession. Some of them are still remembered as embodiments of justice and good government. The services rendered by Subhedars like ZAFFAR

KHAN, ALI MARDAN KHAN and LASHKAR KHAN to their master, the emperor, and to the people of Kashmir have been appreciatively recorded by contemporary historians.

ITQAD KHAN, the last governor of Jehangir continued to hold office for a further period of six years after the accession of Shah Jehan to the throne. A near relation of Nur Jehan, he had, during the time of Jehangir, indulged with impunity in tyrannical rule and levied iniquitous taxes on several commodities and particular communities. The people were harassed by him. Begar or forced labour was levied for the collection of saffron. Nor could he calm down the disgruntled elements among the Chaks who raised a rebellion. It was put down with a strong hand and some of the rebels who escaped death fled to Baltistan where they were given protection by the ruler of that principality.

It would be convenient to enumerate here some of the misdoings of the Subhedar to appreciate the benevolent activities of his successors. The farmers of villages round about Pampur were forced to collect the saffron harvest (a monopoly of the State) without the payment of wages. A surcharge of four *dams* was levied on each *Kharwar* of rice collected in revenue. It became customary with villages where revenue exceeded 400 *Kharwar* of rice to give two fat sheep to the local officials or 60 *dams* in cash in lieu thereof. Similarly Itqad Khan changed the age-old custom of realising land revenue in kind and instead demanded its payment in cash at an enhanced rate. The boatmen who used to pay from early times a special tax of 60 *dams* on every young person, 36 *dams* on a boy and 12 *dams* on an old man, were charged to pay 75 *dams* irrespective of the age of the person taxed. Other commodities did not escape taxation in one form or the other. For example, the country had fruits of various kinds in abundance and the fruit trade was brisk. But the owners of orchards were reduced to great distress, the Subhedar appointing his own men to pick the fruit and sell it at their own price. The owners thereupon started cutting down the fruit trees, preferring to keep the land uncultivated rather than yield its fruit to the unscrupulous governor.

Shah Jehan ultimately removed the cruel Subhedar and replaced him by a better man. ZAFFAR KHAN AHSAN, the new governor, was a brave soldier, an accomplished diplomat and a distinguished poet and author. Several of his poetic compositions are in praise of the beauty of Kashmir. Possessed of polished manners and administrative ability, he quickly won the confidence of the people. He at once reported to the emperor their sad plight and recommended the immediate redress of their grievances. Shah Jehan forthwith ordered the abolition of cruel



exactions which went a long way to improving the living conditions of the people. They were relieved of Begar at the time of saffron harvest. The customary tax levied on each *Kharwar* of rice for fuel was also abolished. Villages had not from then on to pay any perquisites to the persons in authority. Regarding the tax levied on the boatmen, the former practice which had been in vogue long before Itqad Khan's enhancement was to be followed. No Subhedar was to grab the fruit grown in private orchards. Any infringement of these orders, so went the royal proclamation, would bring down the wrath of God and of the emperor upon the wrong-doer.

Under Shah Jehan's orders, Zaffar Khan undertook the reduction of Baltistan to vassalage. The Mughal army which had to fight against odds—the snow and slush and the precipitous mountain passes—suffered serious losses in officers, men and supplies. But ultimately they carried the day. Baltistan was subjugated and Abdal Rai the ruler of the territory was forced to pay a heavy war indemnity amounting to a million rupees.

Zaffar Khan laid out several gardens in Kashmir, the better known being "Gulshan" at Buta Kadal quarter of Srinagar and "Hassanabad" on the banks of the Dal canal. Kashmir is grateful to him for having improved the quality and taste of the cherry, plum, peach and grapes by introducing better grafts and saplings from Persia and Kabul.

It appears that the Shia-Sunni conflicts had not died down even with the advent of Mughal rule in Kashmir. For, there was a serious outbreak of rioting among the Sunnis and Shias during Zaffar Khan's governorship. To suppress it Zaffar Khan took strong measures and deported the leader of the Sunnis to Agra.

Shah Jehan visited Kashmir twice during Zaffar Khan's governorship—in 1634 and 1638. During the latter visit unprecedented floods devastated a large part of the city of Srinagar and several low-lying villages. The ripened crop was destroyed with the result that a severe famine took the beautiful land in its deadly grip. Thousands of people perished. Shah Jehan organised relief by sending grain from the Punjab and distributing it among the starving people.

Zaffar Khan was replaced by Shah Jehan's younger son PRINCE MURAD. He remained in charge of Kashmir for only a year. Accustomed to leading a life of luxury, the prince neglected the administration of the land and indulged in the pleasures of life. He had earlier married a daughter of the Maliks of the southern district of the Valley, and taking undue advantage of their relation with the prince, they ravaged the land by loot and undue exactions from farmers. When

the news of the sad condition of the people under Murad reached the emperor he recalled him to Agra and appointed Ali Mardan Khan in his place.

ALI MARDAN KHAN, originally an Iranian, is said to have come by a huge treasure when he was governor of Qandahar and not willing to surrender it to the Shah of Iran, came to India and sought service and protection at Shah Jehan's court.

To him goes the credit of laying out a number of gardens, the chief among which is that of Chashma Shahi near Srinagar. He built a net-work of roads in the Valley with long rows of poplars planted on either side. Nearly all the serais on the great Mughal road over the Pir Panjal pass were built by him. He was tolerant and appointed Pandit Mahadev as his chief adviser.

Another severe famine took a heavy toll of life in 1646 when TARBIAT KHAN was the governor. Thousands of people perished and thousands migrated to the Punjab. Shah Jehan despatched huge quantities of grain from Sialkot, Lahore and Gujrat. Yet another famine due to drought caught the unfortunate Valley in its grip during Shah Jehan's fourth and last visit in 1651. He cut short his visit spending only two months in the Valley. Leaving behind an efficient officer, Nawab Said Ullah Khan, to organise relief to the famine-stricken people, he personally supervised the despatch of grains from the Punjab to the distressed Valley. It was only during the time of Shah Jehan's last governor, LASHKAR KHAN (1657-59) that a measure of prosperity and happiness returned to the Valley.

Shah Jehan stands out as an eminent builder among the Mughal emperors. His monumental constructions like the Taj and Fort in Agra, the Red Fort in Delhi, etc. testify to his architectural taste. In Kashmir too, the emperor has left some specimens of his constructional work. The pavilion and the garden at Chashma Shahi, the upper portion of the Shalamar Bagh on the Dal, with its beautiful pavilion and scheme of fountains, remind one of the grandeur and refined taste of the architect-emperor of India. Pari Mahal, also called Kuntiloon, high up on a spur of the Zebwan hill on the Dal Lake, is presumed to have been built by Dara Shikoh to house his school of Sufism and an observatory. The calm and refreshing atmosphere about the place and the view of the lake and the Valley it commands, testify to the highly developed aesthetic sense of the Mughals.

Under the impetus of Mughal building activities the Kashmiri workmen developed remarkable skill in the building art and we find several workmen from Kashmir engaged on the construction of the

Taj and laying out of Mughal gardens in the rest of India. Kashmiri architecture of the Mughal times was a synthesis of several art impulses—Hindu, Buddhist, Sasanian and Persian. The Jama Masjid in Srinagar which was destroyed by fire twice and rebuilt first by Jehangir and later by Aurangzeb is a typical example of Indo-Saracenic style of architecture.

### AURANGZEB

Aurangzeb came to the throne of his father Shah Jehan in the year 1658. The war of succession in which Aurangzeb played a diplomatic and dominating role ended with the imprisonment by him of his father and defeat and death of his brothers. The mighty Mughal Empire founded by Babar and consolidated by Akbar and his two successors, witnessed with the accession of Aurangzeb to the imperial throne, the beginning of its end, result no doubt of the emperor's unwise policy of communal discrimination. This was in direct opposition to the policy of his illustrious predecessors who had brought all the communities nearer to one another by fostering the spirit of mutual amity and goodwill. Akbar respected the sentiments of his Hindu subjects and even shared with them some of the views on religion as an enlightened and emancipated monarch would do. No wonder the Hindus formed the bulwark of his empire. Aurangzeb was by nature a puritan and conservative in outlook. Times had changed and already a closer contact among the various religious communities was discernable. But Aurangzeb does not seem to have realized change and followed a policy of religious persecution.

Short of this, Aurangzeb possessed several sterling qualities of a good administrator. He carried out his duties conscientiously, was strictly just and honest. He was vigilant and put down corruption with a severe hand. He personally supervised the working of courts of justice. With regard to public money he was scrupulously honest. He led a pious, almost an ascetic's life with austere habits in food and dress.

Aurangzeb visited Kashmir only once, in 1665. He was accompanied by his daughter Roshanara. An interesting account of the emperor's journey to Kashmir has been given by Francois Bernier, a French physician in the employ of Danishmand Khan, a courtier.

The journey was rendered hazardous and troublesome by the precipitous mountain passes which lead to Kashmir. Several persons along with the animals they rode on were killed on the way and many were injured.



think it worthwhile to visit Kashmir often. He considered it sheer luxury and the cause of great hardship to the poor Kashmiris who had to supply labour for the transport of baggage and supplies for the emperor and his large retinue. It was thus the first and the only visit of the emperor to the Valley. He utilized this opportunity in setting up a clean and efficient administration and personally inspected various departments at work.

During the forty-nine years of Aurangzeb's reign, Kashmir was administered by no less than fourteen governors sent from Delhi. Most of them were broad-minded and efficient. They dispensed justice and carried on the administration well. As usual they laid out gardens, built mosques and inns. SAIF KHAN (1664-67, 1668-71), for instance, built the Safa Kadal, the seventh bridge in Srinagar and his adviser, Chaudhri Mahesh, laid out a vast garden with numerous terraces, fountains and cascades on the slopes of the hill at Ishabari. He settled several villages resulting in an increase in agricultural produce. Among the Subhedars under whose rule the people were happy and peaceful may be mentioned ITMAD KHAN (1659-62), HAFIZULLAH KHAN (1686-90) and FAZAL KHAN (1698-1701). In times of unforeseen calamities like famines, floods and fires, they gave succour and relief to the suffering people.

There were, however, some exceptions. IFTIKAR KHAN (1671-75) tyrannized over the Brahmans to such an extent that they approached Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Sikh Guru, at Anandpur in the Punjab and solicited his personal intervention with the emperor. This ultimately led to the Guru's martyrdom, and the conversion of the Sikh community into the fighting Khalsah under his son, Guru Gobind Singh. Similarly MUZAFFAR KHAN (1690-92) and ABUL NASSAR KHAN (1692-98), sons of Shaista Khan, let loose a reign of terror over the people. And when Aurangzeb came to know of their maladministration, he forthwith removed them from office and sent better and trusted people to replace them. Similar was the case with IBRAHIM KHAN (1678-86) who though in the beginning of his governorship succeeded in giving peaceful and clean administration to the province, could not effectively cope with a serious outbreak of rioting among the Sunnis and Shias.

In bold contrast to the inefficient and cruel administration of these governors was the rule of FAZAL KHAN (1698-1701). He abolished several vexatious taxes and removed the restrictions imposed on the people by Muzaffar Khan. Several monasteries were repaired and some new ones built.

The people in general were happy and peaceful. They made great progress in their chosen pursuits of life. Kashmiris were good poets

and scholars, skilful artists and craftsmen. Shawl trade was brisk and formed an important item of the country's economy. Bernier gives a graphic description of the actual conditions of the people during Aurangzeb's time :

“The Kachemirys are celebrated for wit, and considered much more intelligent than the Indians. In poetry and the sciences they are not inferior to the Persians. They are also very active and industrious. The workmanship and beauty of their *palkeys*, bedsteads, inkstands, boxes, spoons, and various other things are quite remarkable, and articles of their manufacture are in use in every part of the Indies. They perfectly understand the art of varnishing, and are eminently skilful in closely imitating the beautiful veins of a certain wood, by inlaying with gold threads so delicately wrought that I never saw anything more elegant or perfect. But what may be considered peculiar to *Kachemire*, and the staple commodity, that which particularly promotes the trade of the country and fills it with wealth, is the prodigious quantity of shawls which they manufacture, and which gives occupation to the little children.....”

### BAHADUR SHAH

Aurangzeb's death in 1707 was the signal for a short and sharp contest for the throne among his three sons—Muazzam, Azam and Kam Baksh. His eldest surviving son Muazzam held the viceroyalty of the Punjab and north-west frontier province of Kabul. Learning of his father's death while stationed at Jamrud, he at once started for Agra. Having foreseen a clash with his brothers he had been making secret preparations to meet the threat and was thus able to move down to Lahore with a strong army in a few weeks. Twentyfour miles north of Lahore he crowned himself emperor with the title of Bahadur Shah.

In the meantime Bahadur Shah's second son, Azim-ush-shan, who was the viceroy of Bengal and Bihar hearing of his grandfather's death moved to Agra with a huge treasure and a well-equipped army, and fearing a combined onslaught of Bahadur Shah and his son, the commandant of the Agra Fort capitulated. Thus the new emperor, Bahadur Shah, became the undisputed ruler of northern India.

Aurangzeb's second surviving son, Azam Shah, who was the viceroy of the Deccan, hastened to the dead father's camp at Ahmednagar and ascended the throne there. At that time, however, the salaries of his soldiers were in arrears for three years and he could, therefore, make

no effective move, till his son, Bidar Bakht, massed a strong force at Gwalior. When finally the combined armies of Azam and Bidar made a move, it appeared that Bahadur Shah would have to face a strong contestant to the throne. The two opposing armies clashed near Samogarh on 15th June 1707. Bidar Bakht had some initial successes, but hampered by a confused medley of baggage, transport, cattle and followers, blinded by dust, dying of heat, thirst and a sand-storm blowing in their faces, his and his father's armies dispersed without any order in their ranks. They were slaughtered helplessly ; Bidar Bakht himself was shot dead and his brother, Wallah Jah, mortally wounded. Azam was killed and most of his officers and the remnant of his army broke and fled.

Freed from his most formidable rival, Bahadur Shah lived in peace for a few years, till his youngest brother, Kam Baksh, raised a rebellion in the Deccan, crowning himself king at Bijapur. Some conquests were made by his agents but he lost the support of nobles and military commanders by his acts of insane cruelty. And when Bahadur Shah moved with a strong force to the Deccan, most of the followers of Kam Baksh deserted, and joined him. On January 16, 1709 Kam Baksh's small force was overwhelmed by the imperial troops and the prince mortally wounded some four miles outside Hyderabad.

#### COMMUNICATIONS WITH DELHI DISRUPTED

Though Bahadur Shah had now no rival to the throne from his own brothers, the empire was in the process of disintegration. His reign of over five years is marked by incessant rebellions, disturbances and invasions. The Rajputs on whom Aurangzeb had made an attack were inflicting deep and draining wounds on the decaying empire. Ajit Singh recovered his ancestral capital, Jodhpur, immediately after Aurangzeb's death, and Bahadur Shah had to send an expedition against him. Though the rebel did ultimately submit, yet in the succeeding period of disturbances, the Rajputs rose again in arms.

In the Punjab, the Sikh revolt assumed such a character that it threatened to repeat in the north the disruptive work of the Maratha rising of the south, and totally destroy Mughal peace. Banda Bairagi mustered a strong force of 40,000 armed Sikhs around him, sacked the town of Sadhaura (near Ambala) and gained his crowning victory by defeating and slaying Vazir Khan, the commandant of Sirhind, and plundering his camp. Bands of Sikhs crossed into the Jullundur Duab, and penetrated as far as Saharanpur occupying half the district. In the meantime, emboldened by the defeat of Vazir Khan, the Sikhs assembled



at Amritsar, resolved to attack Lahore. They ravaged many villages and reached the suburbs of Lahore, though the city itself escaped. Desultory fighting continued, the Sikhs being predominant on the whole, and the north-western road from Delhi was effectively closed. The crisis drew Bahadur Shah to the scene and in the battle of Lohgarh the Sikhs lost heavily and Banda escaped with his life to the hills. Next year (1711) he came down to the plains and raised fresh disturbances. But he was again defeated and driven to the hills of Jammu. Desultory fighting with the Sikhs continued till the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712 when Banda taking advantage of the war of succession recovered Sadhaura and restored the fortifications of Lohgarh, so that all the work of Bahadur Shah was undone.

After the campaign against Banda, Bahadur Shah moved to Lahore. He was planning a visit to Kashmir, but with declining health he fell ill and passed away on 27th February, 1712.

Bahadur Shah had a mild and calm temper, great dignity of behaviour and a generous disposition. On his accession, his own weak position coupled with advanced age, prevented him from asserting his will in any matter. He tried to please all but in the attempt succeeded in pleasing none.

#### RULE BY PROXY

Owing to the disturbed conditions all over the country and particularly in north India the communications between Kashmir and the Imperial Court at Agra were often disrupted. It was not, therefore, possible for Bahadur Shah's first governor of Kashmir, JAAFAR KHAN to assume his duties for some time. The nobles who were assigned the governorship of distant Kashmir in the time of Bahadur Shah and later Mughal emperors, were reluctant to proceed to Kashmir at once, fearing their eclipse due to the rapidly changing fortunes at the Centre. Consequently there grew up a pernicious system of their appointing deputies to rule Kashmir on their behalf. The well-being of the province thus suffered terribly, as the deputies of the governor busied themselves in making the best of the time and squeezing the last penny out of the cultivator and the trader. The people had no means of seeking redress of their grievances, the nominal governor and the emperor, being throughout busy with their own affairs at Agra.

It is not, therefore, surprising that JAAFAR KHAN and his agent ABDULLAH DEHBEDI indulged in the worst type of rule and made unjust and cruel exactions from the people. Jaafar Khan passed his days in drink and debauchery and entirely neglected the administration of the

province. Ultimately the people, whose patience had reached the limit of endurance, rose in revolt and set fire to the residences of the deputy and other high officials. Fortunately for the people, Jaaffar Khan who had contracted a serious illness passed away after an ignoble rule of a year and quarter.

Till the arrival of his successor in 1709, ARIF KHAN was installed as the acting governor. It was in his reign that Qazi Haider known as Qazi Khan a learned Kashmiri who rose to be the supreme judge at Aurangzeb's court died in Agra. His dead body was brought to Kashmir and was buried with honours in the Qazi's garden at Bachhpura near Srinagar.

Bahadur Shah nominated IBRAHIM KHAN to the governorship of Kashmir. Like his father, Ali Mardan Khan, Ibrahim had won laurels in the battles fought for the emperor at Ahmedabad, Kabul and Peshawar. Previously during the reign of Aurangzeb he had held with success the governorship of Kashmir three times—1662-63, 1678-86, 1701-06—and Bahadur Shah in order to wipe off the opposition to the Mughal rule raised by the action of the ill-fated Jaaffar Khan, considered Ibrahim as the best man for the job. But no sooner had Ibrahim reached Srinagar than he fell ill and passed away after a rule of only three months.

Again Arif Khan became the acting governor. Bahadur Shah assigned the governorship to NAWAZISH KHAN, who had been Aurangzeb's last governor of Kashmir and whom the new emperor had recalled at his accession. But Nawazish Khan fearing a reversal of fortune at the imperial court did not proceed personally to Kashmir and allowed Arif Khan to act on his behalf. The latter conducted the administration honestly which won for him the title of Amanat Khan. During the brief period of one and a half year of Nawazish Khan's nominal governorship, Kashmir suffered terribly from floods. A conflagration destroyed several thousand houses in Srinagar.

Bahadur Shah's next governor, INAYAT ULLAH (1711-12), also did not rule personally, but asked Arif Khan (now known as Amanat Khan) to carry on with the administration of the province. Inayat Ullah was a Kashmiri by birth and claimed Qazi Musa as his ancestor. He rose to high position under Aurangzeb and Bahadur Shah. His mother Mariam Bibi was a teacher of princess Zeb-un-nissa. Amanat Khan died after only nine months of the new governor's nominal rule and Inayat Ullah appointed his son-in-law, MUSHARAF KHAN, as his agent to conduct the administration of Kashmir.

## JAHANDAR SHAH

On Bahadur Shah's death in 1712 his successor, Jahandar Shah, continued with Inayat Ullah and Musharaf Khan as the governor and agent of Kashmir respectively. In 1712, however, Inayat Ullah took over the governorship personally in order to subdue the Bomba leader Muzaffar Khan of the Jhelum valley below Baramula, who had raised a rebellion and occupied Drava and Karnah districts of Kashmir. While Inayat Ullah was engaged in the campaign, Jahandar Shah lost his throne and his successor, Farrukh-Siyar, recalled him to Agra.

Bahadur Shah's death and the war of succession among his four sons, weakened the empire further and the hold of the insurgent elements on north, south and central India became firmer. Consequently the emperors could not effectively administer a distant province like Kashmir, difficult of access and liable to attacks from ferocious hill tribes surrounding the Valley.

When, therefore, Jahandar Shah, the eldest son of Bahadur Shah, ascended the throne with the help and advice of his able minister Zulfi-kar Khan and after fighting a series of bloody battles, the governorship of Kashmir had lost its importance and charm for the aspiring courtiers, and Jahandar had to continue with the arrangement of his father during his brief rule of nine months.

Jahandar Shah's cruelty in disposing of his rivals and other princes of the royal household, coupled with his low moral character, cost him his life and throne. Farrukh-Siyar, the second son of his younger brother, Azim-ush-shan, with the help of the powerful nobles, the Sayyid brothers, led an army against him. He had to seek the shelter of the rival of the Sayyid brothers, Asaf-ud-daula. The latter behaved treacherously and with false promises of support, made him a prisoner and informed Farrukh-Siyar who ordered his execution.

With Farrukh-Siyar's accession, Inayat Ullah's governorship of Kashmir came to an end and so did his campaign against Muzaffar Khan the Bomba leader. The latter thus entrenched himself in the hilly regions to the west and north-west of the Valley and threw off his allegiance to the Mughal emperors.

## FARRUKH-SIYAR

Farrukh-Siyar, who succeeded in capturing the throne with the help of the powerful Sayyids was not slow to recognise their services to him. He appointed Sayyid Abdullah as minister and Sayyid Hussain Ali as the first paymaster. But the new emperor had a host of personal



favourites whose leader Mir Jumla was ever influencing the emperor behind the back of the ministers and thus thwarting their work of day-to-day administration. Ultimately they succeeded in creating bad blood between the king and the Sayyid brothers. Another disrupting element was the rivalry between two groups of nobles—the Turanis who came from Central Asia and enjoyed high favour and influence with the Mughal emperors, and the Iranis whose home was Persia and Khorasan, and who were singularly gifted especially in revenue and secretarial work. Though the earlier strong emperors kept these groups under control, their rivalry became the predominant characteristic of Indian history under the weak later Mughals and one of the causes of the downfall of their empire.

Farrukh-Siyar who was thoughtless, fickle and weak, devoid of constancy and fidelity, spent most of his time and energy in overthrowing the Sayyid brothers. He raised to power as a counterpoise to them an older noble, Inayat Ullah Kashmiri, who had been disgraced at the beginning of his reign by being dismissed from the governorship of Kashmir, but who now received the rank of 4,000 and was made imperial revenue minister. He tried to purge the administration of the abuses that had crept into it. But his reimposition of the poll-tax and attempts to resume some land grants of the nobles, raised a host of enemies in that corrupt court. The appointment of another Kashmiri officer, Muhammad Murad, as the superintendent of the imperial harem and raising him to the rank of 7,000 with the title of Itqad Khan, embittered further the relations between the emperor and his Sayyid ministers. The excessive favour shown to Murad alienated most of the former adherents of the emperor. This resulted in the central administration of the empire becoming more and more confused and weak, and the provinces falling into greater neglect than before.

#### DECAY OF THE EMPIRE

There were uprisings and rebellions all over the country. In the Punjab, Banda Bairagi was active with his headquarters at Sadhaura. It was after a long campaign that Farrukh-Siyar's governor of Lahore, Abdul Samad Khan, crushed Banda's opposition by defeating his forces. Banda was captured and finally executed. But no sooner had the trouble subsided in the Punjab than it shot up in another quarter. Jat peasantry of the region round Bharatpur were up in arms under Churaman and with their depredations made the roads unsafe. The emperor despatched a force with Raja Jai Singh in command. He invested Churaman's new fort of Thun hoping thus to secure his submission. The siege dragged on for twenty months after which Churaman opened negotiations over

the head of Jai Singh, agreeing to pay a tribute of five million rupees. The siege was lifted and Churaman remained the master of the territories round Bharatpur.

As if these disturbances were not enough, there broke out open hostility between Farrukh-Siyar and the Sayyid brothers, who were smarting under the indignities shown to them by the emperor in bestowing favours and riches on their rivals like Itqad Khan and Mir Jumla. The younger Sayyid, Hussain Ali, the viceroy of the Deccan, came to Delhi at the head of a huge army of 35,000 horse and foot to seat the alleged son of Muhammad Akbar (fourth son of Aurangzeb) on the throne. In the meantime Sayyid Abdullah, the minister, entered the palace and with the help of his personal adherents occupied the gates and other chambers of the fort palace. On the arrival of Hussain Ali, Farrukh-Siyar who had hid himself in the harem was dragged out, blinded and kept in prison for two months and then strangled to death (April, 1719). Rafi-ud-Darajat (a son of Rafi-ush-shan) was now proclaimed emperor, but being a consumptive was deposed after only three months when the Sayyids installed his elder brother, Rafi-ud-daula, on the throne. Rafi-ud-daula was a very sickly youth and died after a few months' rule. The Sayyids, who had been already looking out for his successor, crowned the son of Jahan Shah (the fourth son of Bahadur Shah), under the title of Muhammad Shah in September 1719.

In such uncertain times when the fortunes of the emperors and courtiers were changing rapidly at the Centre, the political and economic condition of a distant province like Kashmir can well be imagined than described. No wonder the governors who were appointed by the emperors were reluctant to proceed to Kashmir and instead appointed deputies to carry on the administration on their behalf.

#### BOMBA AND GUJJAR REVOLT

Under Farrukh-Siyar Kashmir witnessed the administration of his two governors—SAADAT KHAN and INAYAT ULLAH KHAN. The latter had been the last governor during the reigns of Bahadur Shah and his successor Jahandar Shah, and on Farrukh-Siyar's accession to the throne in 1713, was engaged in suppressing the revolt raised by the Bomba tribe of the Jhelum valley below Baramula under their leader, Muzaffar Khan. On the advice of his personal favourites and the Sayyid brothers, Farrukh-Siyar recalled Inayat Ullah from Kashmir and appointed Saadat Khan in his place.

SAADAT KHAN never visited the province personally but in the three short years of his tenure of office appointed no less than four deputies to rule over Kashmir on his behalf.

The first, ALI MUHAMMAD KHAN who took over early in 1713 spent his two years as the deputy-governor in putting down the revolt raised by Muzaffar Khan. After Inayat Ullah's departure, the Bomba leader had extended his activities to the northern region of the Valley also. On his death his son, Haibat Khan, continued his resistance to the Mughal forces but had ultimately to submit and surrender his son as a hostage. The Raja of Poonch, Abdul Razak Gujjar, who had raised a rebellion was also defeated and after paying a large sum in tribute was restored to his principality. All these campaigns strained the resources of the governor. Ali Muhammad Khan, to meet the demands of the troops, resorted to heavy taxation of the people. This was brought to the notice of Saadat Khan who recalled him and appointed AZAM KHAN in his place. The latter's rule of eleven months gave peace to the Valley. Ali Muhammad Khan, who had by now grown wiser was reappointed for a year after which Saadat Khan sent a fresh deputy in EHTRAM KHAN who was destined to occupy the chair of his office for only a few days, the governor himself being replaced by orders of the emperor by Inayat Ullah Khan, who had regained the emperor's confidence and favour.

This time INAYAT ULLAH did not leave the capital of the emperors and placed MIR AHMAD KHAN to deputise for him in Kashmir. The latter soon won the confidence of the people by a just and benevolent administration. During the subsequent reigns of emperors Rafi-ud-Darajat and Rafi-ud-Daulah and the first few months of Muhammad Shah, Inayat Ullah continued to be the nominal governor with Mir Ahmad Khan as his deputy.

#### RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION

In common with the troubled state of affairs all over the Mughal empire, Kashmir also witnessed the outbreak of the worst kind of religious fanaticism. In 1720 when the affairs at the Mughal headquarters were still in a fluid condition, Mullah Abdul Nabi *alias* Muhta Khan who was the Sheikh-ul-Islam of Kashmir, in order to extend his authority, gave instructions to the deputy-governor, Mir Ahmad Khan, for certain insensate destructive measures against the Hindus. But the good-natured deputy did not oblige him. Muhta Khan then instigated his followers to plunder and set fire to the houses of the Hindus, and assumed the duties of the governor under the title of Dindar Khan. With his limited resources Mir Ahmad Khan was unable to assert his authority and applied to his master Inayat Ullah to despatch a strong detachment of soldiers from Delhi. The governor replaced Mir Ahmad and sent MOMIN KHAN to Kashmir at the head of a small force of Mughal



soldiers. He took some months to arrive and in the meantime Muhta Khan was assassinated by one Sayyid Azhar Khan (whose office of tax collector was usurped by him) in a Shia's house with the result that the Shia community shared the same fate as Hindus at the hands of Muhta Khan's followers. Momin Khan like his predecessor finding it difficult to control the situation confirmed Muhta Khan's son, Mulla Sharaf-ud-din, as his successor to the office of Sheikh-ul-Islam, in order to gain time to organise his government and army. Sharaf-ud-din, however, followed the same policy of persecution of the Hindus and Shias as his father. There was lawlessness and chaos in the land. Finally the emperor Muhammad Shah, dismissed Inayat Ullah from the governorship of Kashmir, appointing in his place ABDUL SAMAD KHAN SAIF-UD-DAULA. Taking with him a large force from Lahore Abdul Samad Khan entered Kashmir in 1722 and immediately put Sharaf-ud-din to death. In one excursion from Naid Kadal to Khwaja Yarbali in Srinagar, a distance of two miles, he hanged fifty insurgents. He removed all restrictions on Hindus who had been forbidden to wear turbans, to ride or to put on the caste-mark on their foreheads. There was justice again in the land and the Kashmiri bard sang :

*Haka av Samad phutrūn zin*

*Na rud kuni Sharaf no rud kuni Din*

Samad (horse) came swiftly. There remained

Neither Sharaf (cardinalship) nor Din (bigotry) anywhere.

### MUHAMMAD SHAH

But this was for only a brief period. During the twenty-nine years of emperor Muhammad Shah's reign, Kashmir became a hot-bed of intrigue among imperial, provincial and local dignitaries, which resulted in incessant turmoil and bloodshed. Added to local troubles were the raids by the hill tribes of Bombas, Khakhas and Gujjars of Jhelum valley, Poonch and Hazara. The government of the Subhedars and their deputies had not enough armed forces and finances to punish the rebels and raiders and during the later years of the emperor's rule they themselves became parties to the scramble for power.

All this resulted from the rapid liquidation of the Mughal empire that was taking place during Muhammad Shah's reign. The Jats round Bharatpur, the Marathas in Malwa, Gujarat and Deccan, the Sikhs in the Punjab and the Rajputs in Rajasthan were delivering massive blows on the edifice so laboriously built up by Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan. Nizam-ul-Mulk was practically independent in the Deccan. Bandelkhand and Bhagelkhand repudiated the authority of the emperor

and there were risings in Allahabad, Malwa, and other places illustrative of both the decay of respect for the imperial government and the ineptitude of the imperial officials.

The final blow was dealt by Nadir Shah who after capturing the throne of Persia in 1736, advanced on Ghazni two years later and thence led an armed invasion of India in 1739. Muhammad Shah was too weak 'to put up any effective resistance and after a sharp and decisive battle at Sonapat, Nadir entered Delhi in triumph on 18th March, 1739. Two days later he ordered a general massacre of its inhabitants and it was only when Muhammad Shah begged him the life of the remaining population that he stopped the terrific carnage.

With an enormous booty in gold, jewellery, horses and elephants Nadir Shah returned to Persia, leaving behind the bleeding body of the Mughal empire of Hindustan with the last breath on its dying lips. Muhammad Shah lived for six years more to witness the final liquidation of the empire.

#### ABUL BARKAT KHAN

Kashmir had its share of lawlessness and chaos during Muhammad Shah's reign. No less than twelve governors were appointed to rule over Kashmir in his regime. They in turn appointed a host of deputies who without any material aid from the Centre, could retain their office on sufferance of the unruly tribes of Bombas, Khakhas, Kishtwaris and Gujjars, as well as the followers of rival nobles and feudatory lords.

The confusing history of the time, however, reveals the personality of a clever deputy Subhedar, Abul Barkat Khan, who first appears on the scene as the deputy of Abdul Samad Khan, the strong governor who restored peace by suppressing the revolt of Sharaf-ud-din. Abul Barkat could not, however, pull on well with the joint deputy and Abdul Samad removed both, appointing NAJIB KHAN as his deputy (1722 A.D.). Three years later during which Kashmir had one of the worst famines, Abul Barkat was again appointed as deputy by the new governor, AQIDAT KHAN. He was removed from office after an inefficient rule of two years. But his successor AGHAR KHAN's misrule gave him an opportunity to lead a successful revolt by the tyrannised Kashmiris who drove Aghar Khan out of the Valley. The emperor appointed a fresh governor—AMIR KHAN—who maintained Abul Barkat as his deputy. After a rule of two years more he was dismissed by Amir Khan, being succeeded by an inefficient and foolish person—EHTRAM Khan. Again he raised a revolt and in a personal combat defeated the new deputy who ran for his life to the plains of India. The governor had no choice but to reappoint Abul Barkat as his deputy.

So for the fourth term (1730-35) Abul Barkat continued to rule Kashmir. It was during this time that Haibat Khan, the Bomba leader, again raised a revolt in the Jhelum valley and entering the Kamraj division indulged in loot and arson. Abul Barkat Khan, who had very few soldiers at his command, failed to suppress the revolt and by offering bribes managed to send away Haibat and his raiders back to their hilly home.

In 1735 emperor Muhammad Shah made a change in the governorship of Kashmir by bestowing it on DIL DILIR KHAN who, being unable to go to the province personally, continued with Abul Barkat's deputy governorship. During these two years (1736-38) of his rule there occurred a devastating flood and a severe earthquake resulting in wholesale destruction of crops and houses and fearful loss of life. To add to the miseries of the unfortunate people Haibat Khan again raided the northern district of the Valley. But now Abul Barkat despatched a strong force under a powerful Kashmiri noble—Mir Jaffar Kanth—who not only defeated Haibat but brought the Bomba tribe under complete subjugation.

This was the beginning of the rivalry between Abul Barkat and Mir Jaffar Kanth. Soon there broke out open hostility between their followers and for months Srinagar was turned into a battlefield of the contending leaders. Finally Kanth sought and obtained aid from the Gujjars of Poonch and in a bloody battle defeated Abul Barkat who to save his life had to flee to the Punjab.

When the news of the discomfiture of his deputy reached Dil Dilir Khan, he despatched another Mughal Sirdar, JALIL-UD-DIN KHAN at the head of a strong force to Kashmir. But by then the Valley had fallen a prey to utter lawlessness for which the depredations of Jaffar Kanth were mainly responsible. The new deputy finding it impossible to restore peace resigned his job and the emperor appointed another noble, FAKHR-UL-DAULAH to the governorship of Kashmir.

Both the new governor and his deputy failed to suppress the unruly elements and so after a brief term of nine months, the post was offered to INAYAT ULLAH II, the son of Inayat Ullah Kashmiri who had during the reigns of previous emperors, held it several times with distinction.

Inayat Ullah's choice of his deputy was unfortunate. He was a weakling and when in 1739 Nadir Shah invaded India, the previous governor Fakhr-ul-daulah won him over to his side and getting for himself a royal *firman* from Nadir entered Kashmir as the viceroy of the invader. In fact he struck coins and read the *Khutba* in the name of Nadir Shah. But the people of Kashmir refused to acknowledge the



new emperor and on Nadir's return to Persia rose in revolt driving Fakhr-ul-daula out of Kashmir. Abul Barkat appeared again on the scene and securing the deputy governorship from Inayat Ullah set up his headquarters in Srinagar.

#### FALL OF ABUL BARKAT

Abul Barkat now became more ambitious. Realizing that Nadir Shah's invasion had practically destroyed the power of the emperor, he quickly consolidated his position in Kashmir and rose against his master, Inayat Ullah Khan who was twice defeated and forced to hide himself in the city. Abul Barkat declared his independence. Soon, however, Inayat Ullah and his son mustered an army and defeated Abul Barkat. The latter took shelter with the Gujjar ruler of Poonch. Leading a strong force of Gujjars he again attacked Inayat Ullah who was completely defeated and ran for his life to Raja Mahmood Khan, the leader of the Bomba tribe.

The Bombas seized this opportunity and again entered the Valley where they indulged in looting and killing of the people. Ultimately Abul Barkat's men caught hold of Inayat Ullah and treacherously murdered him (1741 A. D.)

On Inayat's death the emperor appointed another nominal governor, this time ASAD YAR KHAN. But he was unable to dislodge Abul Barkat, who continued to rule as an independent king. But soon he had trouble with his Gujjar supporters whom he succeeded in driving out with the help of his local followers. Trouble broke out from another quarter. One of his trusted lieutenants raised a revolt and with the help of the Shias attacked Srinagar. Abul Barkat who was ailing from a fell disease instead of crushing the rebels, vented his wrath on the poor Shia community. The rebel leader, Bir Ullah Beg, won over most of the troops of Abul Barkat and thus succeeded in controlling the whole Valley. Abul Barkat was arrested and thrown into prison. This was a signal for general lawlessness. The hill tribes came down upon the helpless Kashmiris and for four months anarchy and chaos ruled supreme.

Ultimately the emperor appointed another governor, ABUL MANSUR SAFDAR JUNG (1745-48), who sent NISAR KHAN as his deputy with a strong contingent of Mughal forces. The latter acted diplomatically and securing Abul Barkat's release sent him to Delhi to the court of the emperor. He won over the rebel Bir Ullah and appointed him to a responsible post. Within a short period of six months normal conditions were restored in the war-torn land of Kashmir.

Abul Barkat Khan was destined to live only for a few months more. A versatile man, fond of literature and poetry, he was a clever politician and an army leader. For over twenty-five years he dominated the political scene in Kashmir, at a time when the fortunes of both the Mughal Empire and Kashmir stood at cross-roads. Ambitious by nature, he did not hesitate to adopt mean intrigue to advance his interests, and overlooked the lapses of his subordinates so long as they proved useful to him. But though he maintained a semblance of government during a period of uncertainty and alarm, his intrigues and frequent campaigns were a source of misery and penury to the harassed people.

#### THE GREAT FAMINE

It appears that the Fates were dead-set against the people of Kashmir at this period, as during 1746-47 there occurred a flood which washed off the ripened crops. The loss was all the more unfortunate because the reserve food stocks had been exhausted during the preceding years of political upheavals and chaotic administration. The result was a severe famine which wiped off more than three fourths of the population of the Valley through death, emigration and disease. Dead bodies lay strewn on the ground, unburied and uncremated, to be eaten by vultures. It was a horrible sight to find the famished survivors crawling their way to India and dying like flies due to exhaustion and hunger. Most of the Kashmiris who were fortunate to reach the plains settled permanently there. Some of them went to Delhi and later made a mark both at the imperial court and with its successors, the British.

#### RISE OF ABDALI

And while the black famine was taking its cruel toll of life in the Valley, an event destined to have far reaching consequences for its inhabitants was taking place in distant Persia. On June 2, 1747, Nadir Shah was assassinated and his empire dissolved. Among his chief commanders was Ahmad Shah Abdali, an Afghan who had risen to high rank in Nadir's service. When Nadir was assassinated Abdali returned to his own country and with the help of his tribe and a force of Qizilbash horse established himself at Herat, captured Qandahar and expelled from Kabul Nadir Shah's governor of that province. Having thus reduced to obedience the whole of Afghanistan proper, he assumed the royal title.

Ahmad Shah Abdali next crossed the Indus with 30,000 horse and invaded the Punjab and after capturing Lahore pushed on to Delhi.

His advance was, however, halted at Sirhind by the army of the Mughal emperor led by the prince Ahmad Shah. A bloody battle ensued, resulting in Abdali's defeat and retreat towards Afghanistan.

### AHMAD SHAH

The victorious prince while on his way back to Delhi heard of his father's death at Panipat and on 29th April, 1748 he was crowned as the emperor of Hindustan.

But it was an empire only in name. India south of the Narbada and west of the Wainganga and the Godavari was ruled by a prince independent in all but name. The three provinces of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa were ruled by another independent prince. West of Bengal lay the viceroyalty of Oudh virtually independent under a hereditary ruler and destined to absorb the provinces of Allahabad and Rohilkhand. Malwa formed a part of the dominions of the rising power of Marathas and the same may be said of the richer province of Gujarat. Rajputana stood sullenly aloof from the empire and the Punjab, Multan and Sind lay at the feet the new Afghan King, Ahmad Shah Abdali. All that remained to Delhi were the northern half of the Gangetic Duab and a strip of territory which only at one point attained the width of a hundred miles. Within this limited area the emperor of India exercised such authority as his ministers were pleased to leave in his hands. The great nobles were entirely selfish, devoid of patriotism and honour and interested only in dividing among themselves the remnant of the dominions of the Great Mughal.

### ANARCHY IN KASHMIR

Devoid of armed might, ill-supplied with troops and munitions, the Subhedar of Kashmir, Abul Mansur Safdar Jung, could hardly maintain authority in the province, and his deputy, AFRASIYAB KHAN, was hard put to it to either render assistance to the famine-stricken people or keep the turbulent nobles under check. The latter opened secret negotiations with Ahmad Shah Abdali and promised all aid to him in a campaign against the nominal Mughal ruler. Accordingly Ahmad Shah sent his governor of Peshawar, Jahan Khan Bamzai, with a letter for the Mughal governor of Kashmir, requesting permission to visit the Valley of whose beauty he had heard so much. But Abdali never visited Kashmir, his object in sending this mission being only to gain information on the defences of the province.

In 1748 when emperor Muhammad Shah was still alive, Abdali sent a force of Afghans under Asmat Ullah Khan to occupy Kashmir,



but though he succeeded in penetrating as far as Srinagar, he could not withstand the onslaught of the forces which Afrasiyab Khan was able to muster. Asmat Ullah was killed and his troops were scattered and annihilated.

With the accession of Ahmad Shah to the throne of Delhi, events in Kashmir took a turn for the worse. There were incessant feuds among the followers of the nobles and the Mughal governors. Afrasiyab Khan continued to hold the chair of deputy-governor for nearly five years more (1748-53) when he was killed by poison by an employee who had been purchased by Abdali's governor of Peshawar to commit the heinous act. Complete anarchy followed Afrasiyab's death. He was succeeded by his minor son born of his Kashmiri wife. Malik Hassan Irani, the child's guardian who wanted to usurp all power, got him assassinated after only two months. But Hassan Irani was himself dismissed soon after when the emperor Ahmad Shah appointed a new governor - ALAQLI KHAN.

But in the meantime political conditions in the Punjab and north-western provinces had altered materially. Ahmad Shah Abdali during his third invasion of India in 1751, demanded the cession of the Punjab and Multan. The Mughal governor of the Punjab withstood the invader for four months but had ultimately to yield to the Afghan forces of Abdali. Before the invaders could reach Delhi the pusillanimous emperor Ahmad Shah had purchased safety by a disgraceful treaty which ceded the Punjab and Multan to Afghanistan.

#### AFGHAN INVASION AND END OF MUGHAL RULE

So when Alaqli Khan took over the governorship of Kashmir, he thought it prudent to appoint a Kashmiri, Mir Muqim Kanth, as his deputy. Mir Muqim, finding the treasury empty, adopted measures to effect economy in expenditure, and in this process disbanded a number of troops and cut the salaries of the rest. This created disaffection in the army and seizing the opportunity Abul Qasim Khan the son of Abul Barkat Khan who though a pauper was yet ambitious, won over the armed forces to his side and driving away Mir Muqim Kanth declared himself the independent ruler of Kashmir. Qasim indulged in insensate cruelty and there was widespread distress in the land.

While Ahmad Shah Abdali after his victorious campaign was back in Lahore, Mir Muqim Kanth and Khwaja Zahir Didamari, the two influential leaders of Kashmir, distressed at the depredations of Qasim, took an impolitic step in inducing Abdali to invade Kashmir and to bring it under his rule. Abdali gladly accepted the invitation

and in 1753 sent a strong force of Afghans under Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi. Abul Qasim mustered his army at Shopyan, at the foot of the Pir Panjal pass, and dealt heavy blows on the invader. Fighting continued for fifteen days, both the sides losing heavily in men and arms. Ultimately Ishk Aqasi won over Abul Qasim's commander, Gul Khan Khaibri, and losing heart Qasim left the field but was arrested and taken to Kabul. Ishk Aqasi entered Srinagar in triumph and planted the Afghan standard on the ramparts of Akbar's fort at Nagar Nagar and thus brought to end the rule of the Mughal emperors in Kashmir.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### AFGHAN RULE IN KASHMIR

THE MAUNTAINOUS REGION on the north-west of the Indian sub-continent contains most of the lowest depressions in the vast Himalayan chain dividing it from the rest of Asia. Aptly called "The Corridor" it has witnessed the passage of numerous peoples—the Aryans, Greeks, Scythians, Turks, Tartars, Mughals and Afghans, to mention only a few—who migrated to the fertile plains of Hindustan from the inhospitable regions of the north. It has been the storm-gap through which passed the ebb and flow of the eternal struggle between the nomadic peoples of the Central Asian uplands and the settled, opulent and cultured inhabitants of the plains.

#### "THE CORRIDOR"

Afghanistan as it is now known to the world, was embraced in the Achaemenian Satrapies in the time of Darius Hystaspes (B. C. 500). It was through this country (known then as Pasht or Pakht) that Alexander's victorious armies passed into northern India. With the death of Alexander, the break-up of his empire among his generals took place. Bactria became a kingdom under Satrap Philip; Kabul, Ghazni and perhaps Qandahar, another under Starsanor and Sibertius. The quarrelling and fighting among these Satrapies were prolonged and it was not for several years that Seleukos emerged as emperor of the country from the Euphrates to the Oxus and Indus. Seleukos is said to have given to Chandragupta, in consequence of a marriage contract, some part of the country west of the Indus, occupied by an Indian population. Some sixty years later occurred the establishment of an independent Greek dynasty in Bactria. In course of time their power extended over to the Kabul Basin and probably over whole of Afghanistan. But the mass of the people were evidently Hindu or Aryan who, after the rise of Ashoka, became Buddhist. These varied Hellenic kings seemed to have been driven forth by the invading Scythian hordes towards India where they established Hellenic kingdoms on the Indus.

It was during the time of Kanishka that Afghanistan came under the political domination of the Kushans and Buddhism flourished there. There are still numerous traces of the once Buddhistic population in



this region. A free commercial, political and cultural intercourse with the Indian and Central Asian people during this period resulted in a prosperous and contented people inhabiting this otherwise inhospitable territory. Various barbaric dynasties succeeded one another after the Kushans and there was a constant struggle going on for the acquisition of absolute mastery over the land. In the time of Heun Tsiang (630-45 A. D.) there were both Indian and Turk princes in the Kabul valley and in the succeeding centuries both these races seem to have predominated in succession. Throughout these centuries there existed political and cultural ties between Kashmir and Afghanistan so much so that Kalhana lays the opening scenes of his *Rajatarangini* in the latter country.

It was not till the end of the tenth century that a Hindu prince ceased to reign in Kabul, when it fell into the hands of the Turk, Subaktigin, who had established his capital at Ghazni. There, too, reigned his famous son Mahmud and a series of descendants till the middle of the twelfth century. The Ghazni dynasty was succeeded by that of Alau-ud-din of Ghor whose nephew Shihab-ud-din Muhammad repeatedly invaded India.

Afghanistan and its adjacent countries of the north and south were included in Timur's conquests and Kabul at least remained in the possession of one of his descendants till 1501, only three years before it fell into the hands of another and more illustrious one, Sultan Babar. From the time of his conquest of Hindustan as a result of the first battle of Panipat in 1526, Kabul and Qandahar remained a part of the vast Mughal empire.

The relation between Afghanistan and Kashmir remained to some extent curtailed from the attempted invasion of the Valley by Mahmud in 1015 to its annexation by Akbar in 1586 when it was included in the Subha of Kabul. During the Mughal rule there was close contact and commercial and political intercourse between the two sub-divisions of the Subha, and Kashmiris again became familiar with their old neighbours. But during the long interval of five centuries and more Afghanistan had undergone a metamorphosis in the composition of its population mostly due to the rise of the Mongols and Turks under Chaghe Khan and Timur. No longer were there the old talented artists and craftsmen, no longer were there the cultured, peace-loving and prosperous people. Instead, their place had been taken up by a rough but hardy and valorous people of the Turkish and Mongol descent, divided into numerous clans, each fiercer than the other. When not engaged in a war with their neighbours, their propensities to adventure often found vent in clan warfare and personal vendetta, so much so that to

them the cutting of a "human head was no more cruel than plucking a flower."

#### FOUNDATION OF AFGHANISTAN

In the first quarter of the eighteenth century A.D., the power and authority of the Safavi dynasty of Persia touched a low level, and fell from the grasp of a weak and worthless prince into the hands of a band of quarrelsome nobles, laying the country an easy prey to an aggressor. Mahmud Khan Ghilzai, who had freed Qandahar from the Persian yoke, conquered Herat, Khurasan and at length in 1722, Isfahan itself. But soon a deliverer appeared in the person of Nadir Quli, a Turk who in 1729 expelled the Afghans from Isfahan and Fars and extended the Persian monarchy to its ancient limits. In 1736 he ascended the throne of Persia as Nadir Shah.

Nadir Shah who engulfed the Afghans in his hurricane campaigns against the people of India dealt a deadly blow to the decadent Mughal empire. In order to augment his force he had, however, to depend upon the goodwill of the Afghans whom he enlisted in ever larger numbers in his army. Among a band of Afghan nobles whom he patronised was a young soldier, Ahmad Khan, of the Sadozai family of the Abdali clan. His father and grandfather having been killed in battle, Ahmad, a boy of fourteen, took refuge with the Ghilzai tribe, and upon the capture of Qandahar by Nadir, took service under him. He so distinguished himself by his pluck and dash and his organizing capacity, that he rose to the command of the Abdali contingent, 6,000 strong and became the right-hand man of his Chief. At the time of the assassination of Nadir (1747), Ahmad Khan, then a young man of twenty-four, had under his control 10,000, effective horse, and what was even more valuable, the treasure of Nadir Shah, which included the Koh-i-nur. With this treasure and his own personality and powers he was chosen by the Afghan chiefs at Qandahar to be their leader and assumed kingly authority over the eastern part of Nadir's empire, with the style of Duri-Durran, "Pearl of the Age", after which his clan came to be known as Durrani. With Ahmad Shah, Afghanistan as such first took its place among the kingdoms of the world.

#### ABDALI'S CAMPAIGNS

After giving a semblance of orderly government to his subjects, Ahmad Shah undertook the invasion of India. A dispute between two brothers for the governorship of Lahore in 1747 gave him an opportunity of declaring himself the protector of one and brought him into the very heart of the falling Mughal empire. He speedily conquered Lahore

and then hastened towards Delhi. The imperial troops under the command of Prince Ahmad halted his advance near Sirhind and unable to break their lines, Ahmad Shah Abdali retreated to Afghanistan. He repeated his invasion in 1749 but did not advance beyond Lahore, where the governor bought him off by the cession of the revenue of four sub-districts. Retreating to his fastnesses with a rich booty and leaving the administration of his Indian territories in the hands of his lieutenants, Ahmad Shah began to concentrate on new ventures.

In 1750 he captured Herat and Meshed and next year annexed Nishapur. In 1751 he again entered India and after a sharp struggle with Muin-ul-Mulk, the governor of the Punjab, Abdali over-ran the province and proceeded to Delhi. But before he could reach the imperial capital the cowardly emperor Ahmad had purchased safety by a disgraceful treaty which ceded the Punjab and Multan to Afghanistan. While back at Lahore, he received an invitation from the leaders of Kashmir to rid the kingdom of cruel governors of the decadent Mughal emperors, and bring it directly under his rule. He sent a strong force of Afghans under his lieutenant, Ishk Aqasi on this mission who after overcoming stiff resistance put up by the Mughal forces in Kashmir, annexed the territory to the expanding kingdom of Abdali.

On June 2, 1754, the Mughal emperor Ahmad Shah was deposed and prince Aziz-ud-din, the eldest surviving son of Jahandar Shah, was raised to the throne under the title of Alamgir II. His chief minister Ghazi-ud-din planned to recover the Punjab for the emperor. Abdali's governor of the province, Muin-ul-Mulk, who died in 1753 had been succeeded by his widow Mughlani Begum who had made herself feared. But she was not fitted to govern a large and impoverished province. Ghazi-ud-din led a strong army against her and after arresting her conferred the government of the Punjab on his nominee.

This impudent aggression aroused the wrath of Ahmad Shah Abdali who marched on Lahore and after capturing it without firing a single shot, advanced by forced marches on Delhi which he entered on January 28, 1757. He stayed in the city for nearly a month, during which time he sacked it and pillaged the citizens. There he married a Mughal princess to his son Timur, and took for himself a princess of the Mughal dynasty as wife. Returning homewards, he again left the feeble emperor on his ancestral throne. He, however, put his eleven-year old son, Timur Mirza, in charge of the Punjab.

But meanwhile the Marathas who constituted the most powerful force in India were invited by Adina Beg the governor of Jullundur to occupy the Punjab, promising them large sums of money. Accordingly



the Marathas appeared on the scene in 1758, and driving Timur across the Indus, occupied Lahore. After this easy conquest, Raghunath Rao, the brother of the Peshwa and leader of the Maratha forces in the Punjab, appointed Adina Beg governor and himself retired to the Deccan. Shortly afterwards Adina Beg died and a Maratha chief, Sabaji Bhonsle, was nominated to be his successor. By their occupation of the Punjab, the Marathas challenged the powerful Afghan monarch who, however, could not immediately answer it, being engaged in quelling a rebellion raised by the Afghan chief of Baluchistan.

Ahmad Shah Abdali, after forcing the rebellious chief to submission, attacked the Marathas in 1759 compelling them to evacuate Lahore which he occupied. Driving the main body of the Marathas in front of him, Ahmad Shah defeated them some ten miles north of Delhi. Similarly he defeated another Maratha force under Mulhar Rao Holkar and the power of the Marathas was thus temporarily shattered in Northern India.

The Peshwa upon hearing of these disasters, prepared a great army under the command of Sadasiv Rao. Marching north, its numbers were swollen by the forces of other Hindu princes and by thousands of irregulars of every sort.

Ahmad Shah Abdali had encamped during the rains of 1760 some thirty miles to the north of Delhi. Here he was joined by the redoubtable forces of the Rohila chief, Shuja-ud-daula.

### THIRD BATTLE OF PANIPAT

So on January 14, 1761 the two armies clashed at the battlefield of Panipat. For the first time the Marathas, contrary to their fighting tactics, met the enemy in an open field face to face. After an opening attack of the Maratha artillery, the Afghans made a counter-attack with their infantry. Their charge was, however, nullified by the fierce onslaught of the Maratha cavalry. The battle continued with varying fortunes till the afternoon when Vishwa Rao, the Peshwa's son and Sadasiv Rao were both killed. The Marathas lost all hope and retreated in disorder. The pursuit by moonlight cost tens of thousands of lives and the Maratha defeat was complete.

But though this great victory enhanced the prestige of Abdali, it did not yield him any material or political gain. His soldiers insisted on returning to their homes. Accordingly after extracting as much money as possible at Delhi, where he nominated Ali Gauhar, son of the murdered Alamgir, as emperor, under the title of Shah Alam, Ahmad Shah Abdali marched back to the highlands of Afghanistan.

But he was not left there in peace for long. Another power was taking its birth and making itself felt in the Punjab—that of the Sikhs. Since their rising power demanded his serious attention, Abdali came down to the Punjab in 1762 and inflicted a heavy defeat on them. Ahmad stayed in Lahore for a year, trying to establish peace in Northern India. It was during this stay that he recovered Kashmir which had rebelled under Raja Sukh Jiwan, one of his governors of the province.

Upon his departure from the Punjab, the Sikh power recovered rapidly and Abdali reappeared in Lahore in 1764. He had, however, to hasten back to Afghanistan to quell a civil war. No sooner did he leave the city than the Sikhs captured it again and wiped off all the vestiges of Afghan rule.

By 1767 Ahmad Shah Abdali realized his vain attempts to root out the warlike Sikhs. In the confusion that prevailed in the north of India then, Khwaja Obeid, his viceroy found it increasingly difficult to carry on the administration. Finally he and his forces were driven out of the Punjab by the turbulent Sikhs and though Ahmad again led a partially successful expedition against them, it became clear he could not retain his Indian conquests any longer. In his seventh and last expedition in 1767, 12,000 of his soldiers suddenly decamped and marched back to Kabul, Ahmad being compelled to follow them. With much difficulty and the loss of his baggage he reached the Indus, pursued by the Sikhs who were thus left in undisturbed possession of the Punjab. Ahmad Shah died in 1773, and his son Timur, more peaceably inclined by nature, never seems to have seriously followed a policy of invasion during the twenty years of his reign.

Such was the background against which the sad and bloody drama of the ruthless suppression of the culture and moral values of the oppressed Kashmiris was being enacted in the secluded Valley. The confusion prevailing in northern India, the pre-occupations of Abdali and the eclipse of the Mughal empire encouraged most of the governors and their deputies to indulge in terrorising and looting the people and often to throwing off their allegiance to the Afghan kings of Kabul. This was naturally followed by the despatch of punitive expeditions against them. The fratricidal wars among the sons of Timur Mirza following his death worsened the chaotic conditions prevailing in Kashmir since the advent in 1753 of the Afghans, to the consideration of whose rule we will now revert.

#### AHMAD SHAH ABDALI

The circumstances leading to the conquest of Kashmir by the Afghans have already been mentioned. (See pp. 414-17).

For sixty-seven years their rule lasted in Kashmir and reduced the country to the lowest depths of penury, degradation and slavery. While inviting the Afghans to take over the administration of the Valley, the Kashmiris had mistaken them for a branch of the civilized and humane Mughal emperors of India. They had hoped that after the break-up of the Central Mughal power, Ahmad Shah Abdali and his successors would give them a stable administration. Little did they imagine that all the beauty and nobility for which Kashmir and its people were famous would be wiped off under their rule. Sorrowfully the poet voices these feelings in the following telling lines :

*Pursidam az kharabiye gulshan zi baghban*

*Afghan kashid guft ki Afghan kharab kard.*

I enquired of the gardener the cause of the destruction of the garden,

Drawing a deep sigh he replied, "It is the Afghans who did it".

Rude was the shock that the Kashmiris got when they witnessed the first acts of barbarity at the hands of their new masters. Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi let loose a reign of terror as soon as he entered the Valley. Accustomed to looting and murdering the subjected people, his soldiers set themselves to amassing riches by the foulest means possible. The well-to-do merchants and noblemen of all communities were assembled together in the palace and ordered to surrender all their wealth on pain of death. Their houses were ransacked, denuded of all that was of any value therein. Those who had the audacity to complain or to resist were quickly despatched with the sword and in many cases their families suffered the same fate. Red-hot iron bars were applied to the body of a rich Muslim nobleman, Jalil by name. Another, Qazi Khan, had to pay an enormous fine of a lakh of rupees, but suspecting that he had not surrendered his all, his son was put to such physical torture that he ended his life by drowning himself in the river. Finding themselves unable to carry on their trade, more than eighty Hindustani merchants who had established their houses of business in Kashmir left for their homeland. The whole economy of the Valley was utterly ruined. Peasants would not till their land for fear of heavy exactions. People could not walk through the streets : without fear of being robbed of even their scanty clothing by the soldiery; the shawl weavers left their looms unattended; the grocers would not open their shops. Life became one long night of gloom and misery. Ultimately finding that nothing more could be extracted from the people, Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi left the Valley after a misrule of five months, carrying with him a huge sum of more than a crore of rupees. He left the administration of



the Valley in the hands of Abdullah Khan Kabuli and appointed a Khatri, Sukh Jiwan Mal as his chief adviser.

#### RAJA SUKH JIWAN

The disillusioned and depressed Kashmiris would not, however, look with equanimity on the continuance of the tyrannical Afghan rule. One of the influential nobles, Abdul Hassan Bandey, entered into a conspiracy with the Afghan Sirdar's adviser, Sukh Jiwan Mal, and after a few months' rule, the Sirdar and his son were assassinated. Sukh Jiwan Mal, thereupon, became the virtual ruler of the land.

The people of Kashmir breathed a sigh of relief. They flocked to enrol themselves in the army of Sukh Jiwan who taking advantage of popular hatred against the Afghans, and pre-occupations of Ahmad Shah in the Punjab and Persia, declared his independence (1754). Driven to narrow straits, the clever Ahmad Shah bore this treachery on the part of his vassal and bided his time. To dispel all suspicion he confirmed Sukh Jiwan as his viceroy of Kashmir and deputed an Afghan noble, Khwaja Kijak, to work under him as his deputy.

The campaigns of Ahmad Shah in India and the retaliatory uprisings of the Marathas and Sikhs emptied his treasury. A huge sum of money to the tune of several crores was demanded from Sukh Jiwan who was ordered to collect it from the Kashmiris by any means, fair or foul. When the impoverished people heard of this demand they organized a strong resistance and under the leadership of Abul Hassan Bandey totally refused to pay. Meanwhile they induced Sukh Jiwan to extern Khwaja Kijak and his Afghan sympathisers from the Valley. Thus encouraged, Sukh Jiwan acted accordingly and defeating the Afghan forces at Baramula freed the country of their tyrannies.

The defeat of Khwaja Kijak enraged Ahmad Shah. At the head of a formidable force of thirty thousand brave Afghans, Ishk Aqasi was again deputed to Kashmir to reduce the country. But the Afghans chose a wrong time for attack. In mid-winter when the passes lay under twenty feet of snow, the Afghans were goaded into action. The result of the battle was a foregone conclusion. Sukh Jiwan Mal at the head of his determined though poorly equipped Kashmiri army, delivered a massive assault and the benumbed Afghans were completely annihilated. Those who survived the bullets and swords of the Kashmiris were taken prisoner and sent in humiliating costumes to the city to be jeered at by the victorious Kashmiris.

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah's authority in the Punjab was being challenged by the imperial forces and his governor Mughlani Begum was taken prisoner by Ghazi-ud-din, the prime minister of Alamgir II. The

Marathas were gaining an ascendancy in Delhi and were even making sporadic attacks far into the Punjab. In such a fluid state of political conditions, Sukh Jiwan finally declared his allegiance to the emperor at Delhi who accepted it with great alacrity. Sukh Jiwan was granted the title of 'Raja' and became the virtual ruler of Kashmir.

On the advice of his chief minister, Abul Hassan Bandey, Raja Sukh Jiwan Mal dismissed the various Maliks or wardens of the passes appointing more trustworthy officers to these important posts. An army of thirty thousand soldiers, experienced in mountain warfare, was deployed to guard them. By taking these measures he ensured the safety of the Valley from outside aggression.

But Kashmiris had fallen on evil days. A severe famine occurred in 1755 as a result of untimely rains and exactions levied earlier by Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi. The wise minister rose to the occasion, distributed in an equitable manner the grains stored in the State graneries and saved the population from death by starvation. He wisely husbanded a fair proportion of the grains for next year's seed. But unfortunately next year's crop was not a bumper one and the scarcity conditions continued for two years more. At this time there appeared a blessing in disguise. Locust swarms attacked the Valley but fortunately when there were no standing crops. These very agents of destruction when boiled in water, however, supplied food to the famine-stricken people. The Raja and his minister advanced loans to the peasants to tide over the lean years.

Another calamity seized the people. The Raja had built up a huge magazine of gunpowder near his palace. One night a fire broke out suddenly in one of the out-houses and overwhelmed the arsenal which burst forth with a tremendous explosion. The surrounding locality together with its inhabitants was utterly destroyed. Apart from the huge loss in men and material, the destruction of valuable stock of gunpowder weakened the defensive power of the Raja at a very critical time.

Raja Sukh Jiwan was a man of high literary tastes. A poet himself, he extended his patronage to men of learning and every evening he held discussions and symposia with the litterateurs of his time. He was particularly interested in the study of the history of Kashmir and employed a band of accomplished historians of his time to write a comprehensive history. He was above all narrow sectarian and religious bigotry. On every Friday he would be present at the congregational prayers of Muslims in Jama Masjid. He was a perfect gentleman, truthful and just.

But his end was not happy. Ahmad Shah Abdali was biding his time to deal a blow on the Raja. He sent back the Kashmiri noble, Mir Muqim Kanth, to the Valley to sow discord between the Raja and his able minister, Abul Hassan Bandey.

The honest and straightforward Raja's mind was quickly poisoned against his minister. Then followed a chain of unhappy events leading eventually to the destruction of the good work undertaken by this ruler. Abul Hassan was dismissed on a false charge of attempting to murder the Raja and Mir Muqim Kanth was appointed in his place. But the Raja after a few months realised his mistake, dismissed Kanth and reappointed Abul Hassan.

At about this time (1758) the power of Abdali was at a very low ebb in the Punjab. The Marathas were invited by Adina Beg, governor of Jullundur, to occupy the province. They drove away the forces as well as the viceroy of Abdali across the Indus and carried their arms deep into the Punjab. Raja Sukh Jiwan in order to profit by the weak state of the Afghans planned to undertake a conquering expedition to the neighbouring principalities of Bhimber and Rajauri. A force of 10,000 strong was sent to attack Sialkot and Bhimber. The Afghan governor of Sialkot, Yar Khan, with the help of the Raja of Jammu, Ranjit Dev, who looked with suspicion on the activities of the Kashmir ruler, defeated the forces of Raja Sukh Jiwan and forced them to retreat to the Valley without any substantial gain. These reverses considerably undermined his position in Kashmir. The Bombas of the Jhelum valley attacked the northern districts of the Valley but Abul Hassan promptly drove them out. Hearing of the defeat of the Raja's forces in Sialkot, Abul Hassan, who was already disgusted with the treatment meted out to him, raised his banner of revolt and established his forces on the right bank of the river. Raja Sukh Jiwan quickly attacked him and Bandey was forced to flee to Poonch where he ended his life. There followed consequently rapid changes in administration, weakening his position further. At last he appointed Mahanand Dhar as his chief minister and at his instigation he began a policy of religious persecution. The sympathies of the people were thus alienated. The Raja invited a large number of Brahmans from the Punjab and settled them in the Valley, hoping thus to be able to retain his position against the Muslim subjects. Instead of protecting his interests, these mercenaries engaged themselves in loot and arson.

#### NUR-UD-DIN KHAN BAMZAI

Meanwhile Ahmad Shah Abdali had recrossed the Indus, brought the Punjab under his sway and dealt a heavy blow on the rising power



of the Marathas. On his return from Delhi, he sent a punitive expedition against Sukh Jiwan from Lahore in 1762 under the leadership of NUR-UD-DIN KHAN BAMZAI. Crossing the Tosamaidan pass the Afghan forces entered Kashmir and bivouacked on the Chera Udur *Karewa*. Sukh Jiwan at the head of a force of forty thousand soldiers marched to give battle to the enemy, but no sooner had the fight started than a major portion of his army deserted to the Afghans and he was captured. When presented before Nur-ud-din Khan he was ordered to be blinded. In this miserable condition he was carried to Lahore and brought in presence of Ahmad Shah who got him trampled to death under the feet of an elephant.

Thus ended the life of a ruler who has been highly spoken of by contemporary historians, Muslim as well as Hindu. But for the unstable conditions prevailing all around Kashmir and covetous eyes cast on the Valley by the Afghans, his rule should have been one of the most successful in Kashmir.

After quelling the rebellious elements in Kashmir during a year's stay, Noor-ud-din returned to Kabul, leaving the administration of the province in the hands of BULAND KHAN BAMZAI.

The new governor was a man given to the pleasures of life. The Shia-Sunni conflicts again became the order of the day. Due to the scarcity of rains, the Sunnis of the city were busy at prayer in the Idgah Maidan when some one reported that the Shias of a neighbouring locality had uttered some disrespectful words about the four Caliphs. The congregated Muslims were enraged and going into a hot frenzy, they looted the property of the Shias and set their houses on fire. Buland Khan at once appeared on the scene and succeeded in restoring peace. A few days later he held an inquiry and finding the Shias to have been initially at fault, inflicted severe punishment on their leaders.

Close at the heels of man-made trouble came a natural calamity in the shape of a severely cold winter when the Jhelum and all the lakes and nullahs were frozen deep (1764). To keep themselves warm people cut down fruit trees and in many cases they pulled down timber off the roofs of their own buildings. In the midst of the sufferings of the Kashmiris, Buland Khan gave up the administration of the country and while on his way to his home he died at Jammu.

In 1764 Ahmad Shah Abdali again deputed NUR-UD-DIN KHAN BAMZAI as his governor of Kashmir. Being a wise administrator and of a mild disposition, he thought it best to associate the two leading nobles of Kashmir with his government. The Kanth and the Dhar families were then headed by Mir Muqim and Pandit Kailash respectively. He appo-

inted the former as his Dewan and the latter as the revenue collector. For some time the two carried on with their work in perfect accord, but their rivalry at the court strained their relations. Mir Muqim induced Nur-ud-din Khan to force the Pandit to make the payment of the stipulated revenue in daily instead of monthly instalments. This put Kailash Dhar in a great quandary. Mir Muqim was at this time murdered and it was widely suspected that Kailash Dhar's hand was behind this crime. In proof of Kailash Dhar's guilt, Mir Muqim's relations produced before Nur-ud-din the pistol with which the shots were fired at the victim. The pistol, it was alleged, belonged to Kailash Dhar since his initials were engraved upon it. But the governor wisely refrained from implicating the Pandit in the conspiracy. He, however, consoled and comforted the sons and relatives of Mir Muqim, but the injury was too deep to be easily forgotten by them. Thenceforth they carried a personal vendetta against Kailash Dhar and his family. Mir Muqim's son Faqir Ullah, failing to have his grievances redressed at the hands of Nur-ud-din, fled the Valley and took shelter with Raja Muhammad Khan Bomba of Muzaffarabad.

In 1765 Ahmad Shah Abdali recrossed the Indus and entered Lahore. To meet his Chief, Nur-ud-din left for that city leaving the government of the Valley in the hands of his nephew, JAN MUHAMMAD KHAN and appointing one Gurmukha Singh as his chief adviser. No sooner had he turned his back on the Valley than one of his proteges, a Jagirdar of Biru Pargana, LAL KHAN KHATTAK, attacked Jan Muhammad Khan's forces and defeating them proclaimed his independence. Given to fits of insane rage, he let loose an orgy of loot, murder and arson on the Kashmiris in general and the Hindus in particular. Whole families were wiped off, their valuables looted and the members either put to the sword or drowned in the Dal lake. Nor were the Shias spared. It was alleged by some miscreants that one Hafiz Abdullah, a Shia by faith, was secretly propagating the doctrines of his religion disguised as a Sunni. The man was apprehended and produced before the leading Qazi who after recording the statements of twenty-two witnesses (as required by the Shariat) cut off his head with his own hand. Nature too did not spare the hard pressed Kashmiris. A severe famine took a heavy toll of human life. Lal Khan carried on his depredations for six months when Ahmad Shah Abdali sent a strong force under KHURRAM KHAN who was appointed as governor (1766-67).

The new governor was of a mild disposition and not prone to religious bigotry. He tried to repair the damage done to Kashmir and its administration by the tyrannical policies of Lal Khan. In order to restore confidence among the Hindus, he appointed Kailash Dhar his

chief minister. But he was of a superstitious and pusillanimous nature. When Abdali's forces were again driven out of the Punjab by the Sikhs, Faqir Ullah Kanth induced his patron Mubammad Khan Bomba to make a bid for the throne of Kashmir. The Bomba chief organised a small force and by-passing Baramula reached Sopore. Khurram Khan and Kailash Dhar at the head of the Afghan army went to destroy him and his forces. But Faqir Ullah Kanth again made a detour and carried his forces to the western hills of the Valley. Out-manoeuvred, Khurram Khan retraced his steps to Pattan leaving the Baramula pass to his deputy, Amir Khan Jawansher, to guard. The Afghan forces were about to go into action when the superstition of an inauspicious omen seized Khurram Khan and he ordered his forces to retreat to Srinagar. The Bombas after making a junction with the followers of Lal Khan Khattak at Biru marched on Srinagar which was quickly evacuated by Khurram. Pursued by his enemies, he abandoned the Valley and fled to Kabul *via* the Pir Punjal pass and the Punjab. Kailash Dhar followed suit. Thus without striking a blow the city fell into the hands of Faqir Ullah Kanth and his Bomba supporters.

For a week the furious Bombas, the traditional enemies of Kashmiris, satiated their thirst for murder and arson on the poor citizens. Shrieks of orphaned children and the wailings of old and infirm women rent the sky. For weeks the streets of Srinagar emitted nauseative odour from putrefied bodies. At last Faqir Ullah Kanth called a halt to these insane acts and requested his allies to depart for their homes.

For one year (1767) FAQIR ULLAH KANTH managed to remain at the head of the administration of the Valley, for the first few months owing allegiance to Ahmad Shah Abdali who was content to accept it so long as he received a substantial tribute. Abdali was too much occupied with his troubles in Afghanistan and the Punjab to look into the doings of his deputies in Kashmir. Faqir Ullah had thus a free hand and in order to avenge the murder of his father, he put hundreds of Hindus to death. To escape his fury many accepted the faith of Islam and many left the Valley to seek refuge in India.

Believing himself to be invincible and taking undue advantage of Abdali's discomfiture in the Punjab, Faqir Ullah Kanth like his predecessors threw off the allegiance to Abdali. And then he gave himself up freely to wine and women under the influence of which he issued the most cruel orders. A tyrant as he was, he took special pleasure in perpetrating the most heinous acts. On a trivial provocation he got his maternal uncle trampled to death under the feet of a horse. No wonder that nearly half the population of Kashmir left the terror-stricken land



for good.

But he was doomed. As soon as Abdali came to know of his misdeeds and cruelties, he deputed Nur-ud-din Khan Bamzai again to occupy the country and to punish the insurgents. On reaching the outskirts of the Valley, Nur-ud-din tried to win over Faqir Ullah Kanth by reminding him of his previous associations with the Afghans and assuring him that if he surrendered he would be allowed to continue as the viceroy. But the swollen-headed Kanth did not care even to send a reply. Nur-ud-din therefore determined to use force and entering the Valley by the Tosamaidan pass launched a two-pronged attack from Gauripor and Chandyul. The rebel forces were routed and Kanth sought safety in his retreat to Srinagar. The royal army, however, was at his heels and Kanth who had been greatly upset fled to the Karnah hills where due to excessive drinking he ended his life.

For the third time NUR-UD-DIN KHAN BAMZAI (1767-70) took over the administration of Kashmir and again he proved himself to be a military leader rather than an able administrator. After subduing the insurgents he began to enjoy himself and left the administration of the province in the hands of the erstwhile rebel, Lal Khan, who had remained unbeaten in his strong fortress at Biru when Khurram Khan had been deputed by Abdali to subdue him. He now professed loyalty to Nur-ud-din and soon usurped all power into his hands. He induced Nur-ud-din to ignore all orders and instructions from Kabul and to oppose the entry into the Valley of his successor, MUHAMMAD KHAN KHAZANCHI, appointed by Ahmad Shah. Muhammad Khan was easily defeated at Muzaffarabad and he repaired to Abdali's court to bewail his discomfiture at the hands of Nur-ud-din.

Meanwhile Khurram Khan and his friend Kailash Dhar had acquired sufficient influence at the Kabul court to be able to regain the patronage of Abdali. The intransigence of Nur-ud-din gave them an opportunity to put forth their claims and offered their services to Abdali in reducing Nur-ud-din. Hurriedly a force of 20,000 Afghans was equipped and despatched to Kashmir under Khurram Khan and Kailash Dhar. Fearing dire punishment at the hands of Abdali if captured, Nur-ud-din left Lal Khan in charge of the operations and himself went to Jammu to watch the course that the subsequent events would take.

When Khurram reached Muzaffarabad, Lal Khan in order to test the strength of his forces sent his brother, Saif Khan with a reconnoitring force. He received a good beating at the hands of Khurram and retreating to Baramula advised his brother not to contest the forces of Abdali. Lal Khan therefore retreated to his mountain fortress and left

the field clear for Khurram Khan who captured Srinagar without firing a shot.

KHURRAM KHAN who ruled for only six months in 1771 bestowed his first attention to the reduction of Lal Khan and for this purpose deputed his commander Amir Khan Jawansher with a strong punitive force. But Lal Khan was strongly entrenched and regularly received fresh reinforcements from Poonch. The fort too was so situated as to make it impregnable. Frequently he would conduct marauding sallies into the Biru and Bhangil Parganas of Kashmir and after collecting tribute from the villagers retreat to his hide-out. Khurram Khan, feeble-minded as he was, could not act with determination and sufficient persistence and thus Lal Khan continued to be a source of trouble to the Pathans and Kashmiris. Ultimately Amir Khan Jawansher reported the inefficiency of Khurram to Abdali who dismissed him and appointed Jawansher in his place. Khurram left the Valley by way of Jammu where one day previous to his arrival Nur-ud-din Khan had breathed his last.

AMIR KHAN JAWANSHER, Qizilbash and a Shia by religion, assumed the governorship of Kashmir at a time when Abdali's rule was passing through a crisis (1771). In his declining years Abdali was witnessing the extinction of his dynasty due to the out-break of a fratricidal war among his sons and grandsons. The Punjab had already succeeded in throwing off his yoke and Abdali's authority in India had nearly crippled. Secluded and protected by high mountains, Kashmir had better chances to assert its independence than the Punjab. Amir Khan therefore waited for an opportunity to satisfy his ambitions.

But he made a bad start. Appointing Mir Fazal Kanth as his chief minister he gave himself up to a life of voluptuousness. The natural beauty of Kashmir enraptured him. He built a summer house in the middle of the Dal lake on an artificial island made by dumping earth-filled boats and stones into the water. By means of Persian wheels he took water up to the roof of the five-storied pavilion from where a system of cascades and fountains was fed. One morning while basking in the sun his eyes fell on a beautiful Hanji girl whom he later married and made his queen. Numerous were the days and nights which he spent in her company on the beautiful waters of the Dal lake, when musicians and dancers would entertain the royal couple with their choice performances.

The people, however, were not left in peace. Fazal Kanth in order to avenge the murder of Mir Muqim, beheaded Kailash Dhar in the open court and let loose a reign of terror on the Pandits. Lal Khan Khattak coming out of his fort pillaged the Pargana of Nagam and the

adjacent villages. Saif Khan, his brother, became so bold as to lead his marauding followers into Srinagar. He set fire to the beautiful palaces of Raja Sukh Jiwan situated in the Zaldagar Mohalla and killed a large number of citizens. These rude shocks awakened Amir Khan to action.

Finding that Lal Khan and his brother Saif Khan had willing helpers in the persons of some Afghans in the rank and file of his own army, he apprehended three hundred of his leading military officers and got them beheaded in Nur Bagh below the precincts of the city. Fortunately for him Lal Khan died and to show respect to a brave and independent adversary, Amir Khan brought his dead body from his fort and got it buried with due honours in the courtyard of Shah Hamadan mosque. This act won him the friendship and loyalty of Saif Khan.

In 1771 a devastating flood washed away all the bridges in Srinagar and most of the houses too. While the Kashmiris were passing through natural as well as man-made catastrophies, news came that Ahmad Shah Abdali had breathed his last at Qandahar.

### TIMUR SHAH

Ahmad Shah Abdali had four sons, the eldest being Timur. The other three, Sulaiman, Sikandar and Parvez, had been kept under detention by their father. At the time of Ahmad Shah Abdali's death, Timur was in charge of the province of Herat. The prime minister, Shah Wali Khan, thinking his absence from the capital to be an opportune moment to advance the interests of his son-in-law, Sulaiman, the second son of Abdali, released him and put him on the throne. But Timur on hearing of his father's death hastily came to the capital with a strong and tried contingent of his followers and after killing the minister Shah Wali and wiping off all opposition ascended the throne and struck coins in his own name. His strong action actually stemmed the rising tide of civil war in Afghanistan. He transferred his capital from Qandahar to Kabul.

Timur reigned for 20 years and during this period he led four expeditions into the Punjab. But these were so feebly conducted that he suffered ignominious defeats at the hands of the Sikhs. During one of these raids into the Punjab, a governor of his, Azad Khan, declared himself independent ruler of Kashmir. Timur's possessions in Iran were also a source of friction with the ruler of that country.

But apart from these minor incursions, Timur seems to have learnt a lesson from his father's troubled rule. His reign was comparatively peaceful in Afghanistan and consequently the Afghan rule in Kashmir



was firmly consolidated. All the same the Afghan rulers—and Timur not excepted—considered Kashmir a source of rich tribute rather than a dependency to be ruled justly and humanely. Consequently their barbarities perpetrated on the people were continued in an aggravated form.

Finding that the Government of Afghanistan had fallen into strong hands of Timur, AMIR KHAN JAWANSHER quickly remitted his tribute to the new king. In return he bestowed on him the title of Dilir Jung and confirmed his appointment as the governor of Kashmir. He continued to administer the province till the year 1776.

Amir Khan Jawansher is now chiefly known as the builder of the first bridge of Srinagar—Amira Kadal. He also built the Sher Ghari, the premises of the present Secretariat and Legislative Assembly on the banks of the Jhelum below the Amira Kadal bridge. He laid out a beautiful garden on the western bank of the Dal lake calling it by the name of Amirabad. It is said that he laid waste the old city of Akbar in order to build a palace on the island of Suna Lank in the Dal. His bad example was followed by his Hanji relatives living on the shores of the lake who nearly destroyed 700 Mughal gardens for building their own homes with the material thereof. It is he who connected the Anchar and the Dal lakes by a canal still bearing his name.

It must go to the credit of Amir Khan that he reformed and reorganized the army which was composed entirely of Kashmiris. With its help he had planned to establish an independent kingdom in Kashmir. But being a Shia by faith his intentions were looked upon with suspicion by a majority of the people who were Sunnis. Nor was there a dearth of evil persons to fan the fire of religious bigotry. Amir Khan ultimately fell a prey to it.

Timur's preoccupation with his Bukhara campaign emboldened Amir Khan Jawansher to declare his independence. He at once instituted a reign of terror for the Sunnis. Many leading Kashmiri nobles were apprehended, tried and killed on flimsy charges. For the purpose of holding the mourning sessions on the anniversary of Hassan and Hussein's death he prepared an Imambara on the banks of the Dal lake. He prevailed upon the Sunni Mullahs to read their prayers according to the Shia tenets. All these measures naturally inflamed the passions of the people who sent their emissaries to Timur Shah at Kabul and prayed for his intervention.

But Amir Khan was not taken unawares. He entered into friendly relations with the chief of Muzaffarabad, Muhammad Khan Bomba, and when Timur despatched one of his nobles, Ali Akbar Khan, at the

head of a small force to take over the governorship from Amir Khan, the Bombas launched a guerilla warfare against them. Ali Akbar Khan lost more than half his forces and returned to Kabul in defeat.

Amir Khan was greatly elated by this success. He invited his ally, Muhammad Khan, to Sopore where he was entertained and thanked for his timely help. He also entered into matrimonial relations with two Khakha chiefs of the Baramula Pass—Wali Khan and Amir Khan. A strong fort to guard the Zoji-la was built by him where he posted his own forces over the head of the hereditary Malik of that Pass.

But Timur Shah could not brook these insulting activities of Amir Khan for long. He despatched a strong force to Kashmir under the leadership of Haji Karim Dad Khan. This time Amir Khan acted diplomatically. Knowing full well that he had no chances against the Haji's forces, he entered into correspondence with influential nobles at Timur's court to intercede in his behalf. The trick succeeded and Haji Karim Dad Khan's expedition was recalled and the governorship confirmed in the name of Amir Khan Jawansher.

But he had learnt nothing from his bitter experience. The people continued to groan under his iron heel. Ultimately the popular discontent assumed the shape of an open rebellion which gave a thorough shaking to the governor. Amir Khan therefore adopted a more conciliatory attitude towards the people and deputed his Kashmiri officials to pacify the leaders of the rebellion. They were, however, in no mood to listen. A deputation of popular leaders secretly left for Kabul and induced Timur Shah to finally dismiss Amir Khan. Again Haji Karim Dad left with a strong force and although his passage was greatly hampered by the activities of Amir Khan's allies, the Bombas and Khakhas, he ultimately succeeded in conducting his army safely to Baramula.

Amir Khan sent his forces under Tar Quli Khan to meet him. Haji Karim Dad effected a crossing of the river Jhelum a few miles above Baramula and successfully cut off Tar Quli Khan's retreat. Tar Quli, however, finding the Kashmiri forces under him wavering, thought it wiser to cross over to the camp of the Haji. Similarly another Kashmiri force under Mir Fazal Kanth went over in a body to the Haji and Amir Khan, defeated and deserted, fled to the Pir Panjal where he was ultimately captured and sent to Kabul. He passed several years in captivity but in the end Timur forgave him and set him free.

Kashmir had unfortunately not yet come to the end of its troubles. With the accession of HAJI KARIM DAD KHAN to gubernatorial

chair, Kashmir entered into the darkest period of its history. During his seven years of rule, untold cruelties were perpetrated on the people. For the sheer pleasure of killing, numberless Kashmiris were drowned in the Dal. The levy of taxes of various nature reduced the populace to penury and indigence.

After the capture of Amir Khan, Haji Karim Dad Khan began his rule with the appointment of Mir Fażal Kanth as revenue collector and chief minister. But very soon he was dismissed and then killed on a false charge of delaying collections. He then raised a poor Kashmiri Pandit, Dila Ram Quli to the post of chief minister. But even he could not in the least succeed in reducing his ferocity.

Calling his son Murtaza Khan from Kabul, he deputed him to subdue the frontier district of Skardu (1779). Murtaza after bitter fighting was successful in his mission and when Haji [Karim Dad sent the report of this victory to Timur Shah, the latter was highly pleased and conferred on him the title of "Shuja-ul-Mulk".

#### INVASION OF KASHMIR BY RAJA OF JAMMU

Meanwhile Raja Ranjit Dev of Jammu had acquired sufficient power to consider seriously the conquest of the Kashmir Valley. Karim Dad's tyrannical rule goaded the peace-loving people to seeking aid from whichever quarter it could be procured to overthrow him. The disgruntled members of the Kanth family as well as the chiefs of Khakha and Bomba tribes sent secret emissaries to Ranjit Dev promising him active aid in case he attempted an invasion of the Valley. In 1779 while Haji Karim Dad was busy in subjugating Skardu, the Jammu Raja launched an attack *via* the Banihal Pass with a force of twenty thousand soldiers. But Karim Dad's Afghan forces got timely intelligence and lying in ambush behind rocks and in the side valleys they fell upon the enemy suddenly and with such fury that Ranjit Dev's army had to retreat in grave disorder.

Returning to Srinagar in a triumphal procession he was not slow to act against those who had plotted to overthrow him. The Kanth family was practically wiped off. But the Khakhas and Bombas were of a different metal. In 1780 he organised a well-equipped and well-trained army of 7,000 soldiers and marched at its head to punish Muhammad Khan, the Bomba chief. Feigning submission the Khakha chief, Fateh Khan, offered to guide the army to the rear of Muhammad Khan's main forces situated at Muzaffarabad. Tar Quli Khan easily fell into the trap and when his army crossed a few high passes over the Karnah range, they were met by the combined forces of the Khakhas and Bombas who, after defeating and destroying them, captured



him alive. To add insult to injury they sent Tar Quli, bound hand and foot, to Karim Dad. Flying into a rage he ordered the general to be killed and his dead body kept hanging from the Zaina Kadal bridge.

The same year there befell another calamity on the stricken people of Kashmir. A severe earthquake destroyed many towns and villages and shocks of great severity were of frequent occurrence for six months more. Further trials and tribulations were in store for them during the succeeding winter which proved to be bad the lakes and rivers remaining frozen for months together.

#### CRUEL EXACTIONS

The thirst for blood and money induced Haji Karim Dad Khan to commit the basest acts on the Kashmiri people. Without considerations of caste or creed he levied numerous unjust and killing taxes which resulted in complete impoverishment of the people.<sup>1</sup> The rich Jagirdars and nobles had to pay a tax called a *nazarana*, which amounted to four and even six times their income. Most of them after selling their property stole themselves out of the country. The traders and shop-keepers had to pay *Zari Ashkhas*, a sort of levy on goods imported into or exported from the Valley. This shattered the economy of the country. The farmers had to pay an enormous tax on their produce and in order to meet the remorseless demands of his tax gatherers—Aslam and Babu Harkara—the peasants cut down all the fruit growing trees in the villages selling them as fire-wood. Within a month the whole Valley was denuded of its fruit wealth. Haji Karim Dad took special pleasure in inventing new and novel methods of levying taxes. Once, for example, he purposely kept the tax gatherers, Aslam and Babu, in hiding accusing the Pandit community of their murder. He collected their leading members and keeping them in close confinement subjected them to suffocating fumes from cowdung. They implored, they importunated, but the heartless Haji would not release them until they agreed to pay an annual tax (known as *Zari Dood* or smoke money) of 50,000 rupees. The Kashmir shawl was getting popular in Europe resulting in a brisk trade. It could not escape the eye of the Haji. He imposed a heavy tax on this trade innovating the system of *Dag Shawl* or excise-tax on shawls which later on became such a heavy burden on the poor shawl-weavers that they preferred death to the weaver's profession.

Muhammad Khan's independent status was still tormenting him. In 1781 he himself led an expedition against the Bombas. Scoring an

1 Muhammad-ud-din Fauq, *Tarikh-i-Kashmir*, p. 301. See also Sufi's *Kashir*, Vol. I, p. 316.

initial success more through diplomacy and cunning than with the prowess of arms, he succeeded in luring Bhira Khan Khakha the chief of the tribe into his trap. No sooner was he presented before him than the Haji sent him as a prisoner to Srinagar in chains. Bereft of the aid of his Khakha friends, Muhammad Khan could not offer an effective resistance and Karim Dad marched in triumph into Muzaffarabad sacking the town and killing numerous inhabitants. On his return, however, Bahadur Khan, the son of the captured chief, after collecting a few hundred of his followers, made a surprise raid on his army in the narrow defiles of the passes and dispersed it. At once the whole area was up in arms against the invaders. They looted their supplies, ambushed and destroyed the major portion of the army, and cut down the stragglers. Karim Dad managed to escape with only seven of his followers. On reaching Baramula he hurriedly threw up defences. Vexed and mortified at the severe beating he had received, he rode straight to Srinagar in order to work off his spleen on the incarcerated Bhira Khan and other prisoners of war. The former was ordered to be killed in the courtyard of his palace and his followers to be drowned every day in batches of ten in the Dal lake.

Knowing full well the deep hatred that the Kashmiris of all classes bore towards this tyrant and counting upon the dissatisfaction of the population, Sikandar Shah, a younger brother of Timur Shah appeared with a few of his followers in the Kamraj district of the Valley in 1783. He hoped thus to achieve two objects—capture a kingdom for himself and reduce the power and authority of Timur Shah. Karim Dad despatched his son, Azad Khan against the pretender. Finding that the power of all resistance had been completely destroyed in the masses, Sikandar fled. Azad Khan returned to the capital in triumph. The same year saw the death of Karim Dad and the accession of his son, Azad Khan to the governor's chair.

The poplar avenue from the Amira Kadal to the foot of Sankaracarya hill standing till very recent years, was perhaps the only good deed that can be ascribed to Haji Karim Dad, besides the doubtful record of his having repaired the roof of the Ali Masjid at the Idgah in Srinagar.

AZAD KHAN outdid his father in demoniacal terrorisation and victimization of all classes of Kashmiris. At the age of eighteen he started his cruel reign and instilled such a terror into his courtiers that they used to tremble before him. Given to epicurean habits, he took a special pride in the grandeur of his court. With shining and richly set swords and wearing gorgeous dresses the officials, ministers and the slaves would stand mute and motionless when he held his court.

Appointing Dila Ram as his chief minister, he set out on the military conquest of bordering principalities. In 1783 he captured the Raja of Kishtwar to whom, however, he handed back the valley in Jagir contenting himself with the receipt of a rich annual tribute. Next he turned his attention to Poonch. Raja Rustam Khan, the chief of the principality sought safety in flight and Azad Khan's forces gave themselves up to looting and killing the inhabitants of this hill state. The chief minister of Rustam, Gobind Pandit, was killed in the city-square and Azad returned to Srinagar laden with much booty. Next year he led another expedition to Poonch and Rustam this time purchased his life and kingdom by offering costly presents in cash and kind and also a heavy tribute to Azad. Similarly he demanded and received tribute from the Raja of Rajauri.

The Khakha and Bomba chiefs of Muzaffarabad were still at large and were off and on conducting marauding raids into the Valley. Azad Khan determined to end this menace once and for all. Collecting together a compact but efficient and experienced army, he ordered a host of Kashmiris to collect and carry provisions for his forces free of any wages. This forced labour wrought havoc among the peasants who had to leave their hearths and homes at a time when their presence was vitally needed to tend their fields. Heavy was the cost which the people of the Valley had to pay in misery and death for this campaign, since as a direct result of this *Begar* a severe famine occurred in Kashmir taking a heavy toll of human life. Azad Khan, however, succeeded in reducing the chieftains to submission and establishing his garrisons at many strategic points in the Muzaffarabad valley.

#### AZAD DECLARES HIS INDEPENDENCE

This victory, however, turned his head and he began to dream of independence. Timur's discomfiture at the hands of the Sikhs in the Punjab in 1784, finally settled it. Imprisoning his brother Muhammad Jan and two leading Afghan nobles, Gaffar Khan and Asghar Khan, who showed friendly leanings towards the king, he proclaimed himself an independent ruler of Kashmir assuming the title of Nadir Shah the Second. For once Azad showed his generosity towards the Kashmiris. A grand *Durbar* was held and the riches so mercilessly collected by his father were freely distributed among loyal followers and courtiers.

The news of Azad Khan's declaration of independence was carried to Timur Shah when he was returning from his unsuccessful expedition to the Punjab. He was therefore in no mood to send a punitive force to subdue the rebel. Instead he sent a clever envoy, Kifayat Khan, to advise Azad to desist from taking such a rash and impolitic step. Success



attended Kifayat's mission inasmuch as he returned to Kabul with a profession of Azad's loyalty to Timur in proof of which he presented a sum of three lakhs as tribute.

But Timur would not forgive Azad's disloyalty and remain a silent spectator to the destruction of one of his best paying provinces. Next year he sent a force of 15,000 Afghans under Azad's own brother, Murtaza Khan, to Kashmir. But Azad was forewarned. Reaching Muzaffarabad by rapid marches he stationed his forces on an advantageous point from where the enemy was exposed to merciless attack as soon as he attempted a crossing of the Kishenganga river. For seven days the battle raged in all its fury. Many a time Azad was on the brink of defeat, but manfully regrouping and rearranging his men and infusing courage and discipline among them by his personal example, he succeeded at last in completely routing the royal forces who returned to Kabul in a pitiable condition. Azad returned to Srinagar in triumph.

But the spectre of a severe famine and a ruinous epidemic had already fallen on the Valley. Azad's tyrannies coupled with his levy of forced labour and the complete blockade of the Valley by the royal forces, resulted in a total dislocation of agricultural and other economic activities. Very soon people began to die like flies. Cholera also took a heavy toll of life. The shortage of all essential commodities added to the miseries of the people. Salt could not be had even for its weight in silver. While the country was passing through these dark days, Murtaza Khan again launched an offensive hoping to profit by the troubles of the people. But again Azad gave him a crushing defeat.

Signs of popular discontent were becoming visible and the down-trodden people showed great agitation through various political activities. As usual the Sirdar being informed by his secret agents of these activities many nobles and leading citizens were apprehended and put to the sword. But even then Azad did not feel himself safe. Changing his tactics he sent his envoys to Kabul to ask the king's pardon for all his misdeeds and to invoke his aid. But Timur would not forgive. He again despatched Kifayat to Kashmir to arrange the release of some of his commanders taken prisoner by Azad in the Kishenganga battle. Azad treated the envoy with great respect but did not carry out his wishes. Instead he killed the prisoners outside his palace, apparently in retaliation to the king's refusal to grant him pardon.

But meanwhile the fire of sedition was being fanned by certain disgruntled nobles of Kashmir. The net result of it was that there broke out an organised rebellion and a serious attempt was made to assassinate Azad. The rebels had engaged a bravado for this purpose. He entered Azad's bed chamber and firing two pistol shots at him jumped

from the window. Luckily for him the bullet hit his thigh and fearing further assault he ran out of the room and jumped into a boat. A hail of bullets followed him but all missed their mark due to pitch darkness. This was a signal for the insurgents who, led by Azmat Khan, captured the palace and marched in force to Dila Ram Quli's house where Azad had taken refuge. A pitched battle ensued and Azad's followers finding themselves outnumbered fled to the Bijbihara fort. There they organised a resistance and when Azmat Khan and his followers made an attack, Azad's followers easily defeated them. Regrouping his forces and enlisting a large number of Pathans, Azad Khan marched to Srinagar and laid siege to Sher Garhi fort where Azmat had taken up his positions. For a fortnight the siege lasted when Azmat finding himself short of provisions determined to escape during the night. But Azad made hot pursuit. Azmat's riders were hunted down, until the remnants of his army abandoned him and with a few that remained faithful, he sought refuge in the savage gorges of the Pir Panjal range. Aided by mountain guides, Azad captured Azmat together with his lieutenants, Pahalwan Khan and Malokh Khan and about twenty of his followers. Brought to Srinagar in chains, they were publicly executed.

Again Kashmir had severe visitations in the shape of a conflagration which destroyed a large portion of the city. Next year a severe earthquake laid waste a good number of houses, their inmates being crushed to death.

#### AZAD KHAN'S DEFEAT AND DEATH

Timur was thirsting for revenge. The blood of his generals whom Azad executed before the eyes of his envoy, was still crying from the ground. With a force of 30,000 chosen warriors, he sent Madad Khan Ishkzai to lay Azad low.

This time the royal forces moved more warily. They marched in two columns, one crossing the river above Baramula and the other making a rapid advance through the Karnah Pass appeared in the Uttermachhi Pargana. Aided and guided by the disgruntled and dispossessed Kashmiri nobles, Madad Khan's main column making a detour of the hills, captured Srinagar and attacked Azad's forces from the rear. It was in this battle that this dare-devil youth showed his mettle. Deserted by most of his trusted commanders he quickly rallied his followers and destroying his enemy's defences threw his whole army into the battle. For the whole day the royal army launched attack after attack and wherever it succeeded in making a breach, Azad with conspicuous gallantry personally appeared on the scene to stem the tide and hurl back the enemy's onslaughts. But the odds were against

him. Outnumbered and outmanoeuvred by Madad Khan's forces, deserted by his own followers and sabotaged by his tyrannised subjects, Azad lost the day and the royal forces entered the capital in triumph. Azad in the guise of a barber fled to Poonch where he was given shelter for some time by the Raja of that principality. But his ambitious nature goaded him into organizing a rebellion against his protector. His days were numbered. The Raja's forces surrounded him and Madad Khan's general, Islam Khan, appearing on the scene tried to capture him alive. But Azad was too clever to fall into his hands. Ultimately finding that he had no way of escape he ended his life by committing suicide (1785 A.D.)

Haji Karim Dad and his son Azad were nothing short of a scourge on the people of Kashmir. An idea of the enormity of their crimes against the Kashmiris can be had from the account of Forster who visited the Valley in 1783. Writes he :

"Azad Khan the present Governor of Kashmir, of the Afghan tribe, succeeded his father Hadji Karim Dad, a domestic officer of Ahmad Shah Durani, and who was, at the death of that prince, advanced to the Government of Kashmir by Timur Shah as a reward for quelling the rebellion of Amir Khan who has been already mentioned. Though the Kashmirians exclaim with bitterness at the administration of Hadji Karim Dad, who was notorious for his wanton cruelties and insatiable avarice; often, for trivial offences throwing the inhabitants, tied by the back in pairs, into the river, plundering their property, and forcing their women of every description ; yet they say he was systematical tyrant, and attained his purposes, however atrocious, through a fixed medium. They hold a different language in speaking of the son, whom they denominate the Zaulim Khan, a Persian phrase which expresses a tyrant without discernment; and if the smallest portion of the charges against him are true, the application is fitly bestowed. At the age of 18 years, he has few of the vices of youth; he is not addicted to the pleasures of Harem, nor to wine : he does not even smoke the Hukha. But his acts of ferocity exceed common belief ; they would seem to originate in the wildest caprice and to display a temper, rarely seen in the nature of man.

"That you may form some specific knowledge of character of this, let me call him infernal despot, I will mention some facts which were communicated during my residence in the province. While he was passing with his court, under one of the wooden bridges of the city, on which a crowd of people had assembled to observe the procession, he levelled his musket at an opening which



he saw in the pathway, and being an expert marksman, he shot to death an unfortunate spectator. A film on one of his eyes had baffled the attempts of many operators, and being impassioned at the want of success, he told the last surgeon who had been called in, that if the disorder was not remedied within a limited time, allowing but few days, his belly should be cut open; the man failed in the cure and Azad Khan verified his threat.....Azad Khan had, in the first three months of his Government, become an object of such terror to the Kashmirians, that the casual mention of his name produced an instant horror and an involuntary supplication of the aid of their Prophet."

It was a devastated and depopulated land that MADAD KHAN stepped into. A few famished and miserable looking people was all that was left of its once opulent villages and towns. The cultivation of the abandoned fields was the immediate problem, as the farmer not certain of being able to enjoy the fruits of his labour was reluctant to take to his plough and pair. Fear and destitution were writ large on every face.

Madad Khan's heart was moved to pity and he tried to alleviate the sufferings of the few people still remaining in the Valley. But soon the mischievous and disgruntled elements among the nobles and officials started their old game of intrigue and disaffection against his government. This enraged him and he let loose an orgy of repression and cruelty on his enemies and their relations and friends, and in certain instances outdid Karim Dad Khan and his son Azad Khan in cruelty and oppression.

But when after some time all opposition to his rule had been crushed, Madad Khan relaxed his harsh measures and adopted a lenient and benevolent attitude towards the people. He would arrange meetings of learned men and listen to literary and religious discourses which considerably tempered his harsh nature. He even proposed to abolish the Jazya or poll tax on the Hindus, but the collector of revenues deputed from Kabul did not agree with his humane proposal. Before, however, he could intercede on behalf of the wronged community, he was recalled to Kabul in 1786, having served as Timur's governor of Kashmir for only ten months.

He was succeeded by MIRDAD KHAN who appointed MULLA GUFFAR KHAN as the collector of revenue and DILA RAM QULI as the head of the accounts office. Soon an open conflict broke out between the governor and the collector of revenues and when it came to the knowledge of Timur Shah, he deputed his trusted minister, Nishan Khan Durrani, to Kashmir to effect a reconciliation between them.

But Nishan Khan found that the gulf of differences between them was too wide to be bridged and in order to retain only one of the two on the gubernatorial chair, he declared that the one who undertook to pay the highest amount to the Kabul treasury in revenue would be accepted as the governor. Mulla Guffar refused to give any such undertaking and Mirdad Khan became the undisputed governor. To fulfil his undertaking he resorted to a wholesale levy of unjust taxes and spoliation of respectable citizens, which resulted in a devastating famine and shortage of the necessities of life. There were riots against the governor and his officials. Dila Ram Quli had to face popular opposition and it was only the confidence that the governor reposed in him and his own influence that prevented his being handled roughly by the furious mob. Ultimately Mirdad Khan after a severe rule of two years fell ill and died.

For more than four years following the death of Mirdad Khan Kashmir had a little respite from repression. JUMA KHAN ALOKZAI took over in 1788, heralding his rule by the conferment of a Jagir on the famous Persian poet and scholar of Kashmir, Munshi Bhawani Dass. Juma Khan's rule, however, witnessed a serious flood which destroyed several parts of Srinagar.

At this time Timur was organising an expedition against Murad Shah, king of Bukhara, and being hard pressed for funds, demanded a larger revenue from the governor of the province of Kashmir. Juma Khan, however, went personally to Kabul with Dila Ram Quli who explained the widespread distress prevailing in Kashmir and the inability of the people to pay more.

During Juma Khan's absence from the Valley there was a serious clash between the Shia and Sunni communities and the Bomba chief of the Muzaffarabad valley indulged in loot and arson in the northern districts. The Raja of Poonch also took to systematic brigandage and looted the herdsmen of the Valley who grazed their sheep and cattle there during winter.

On Juma Khan's return from Kabul, a punitive expedition was sent against the Bombas and the Poonch ruler and within two months normal conditions were restored. Again in 1791 Timur demanded money and again Juma Khan had to proceed to Kabul to place the accounts of revenue before the king. The Bombas repeated their incursions into the Valley, but were quickly repulsed by Juma Khan who had meanwhile returned from Kabul. He was not, however, destined to rule long and died of dysentery in 1792.

Timur Shah bestowed the governorship of Kashmir on MIRZA

KHAN who entrusted the administration to his son, MIR HAZAR KHAN. Mir Hazar was in charge of Kashmir for only four months when news reached him that Timur Shah had breathed his last at Kabul on May 18, 1793.

### ZAMAN SHAH

At the time of his death, Timur Shah Durrani had twenty-one sons alive. Of these the eldest, prince Humayun, and prince Mahmud, the next in age, were by one mother ; and Zaman who had been declared the heir-apparent and Shuja were by another wife of Timur. As was only to be expected, there was wild excitement as to which of the numerous sons of the deceased king should be elected to the throne.

Payanda Khan, the chief of the Barakzai clan who was the most powerful of the Sirdars, favoured Zaman Shah who occupied the key-position of governor of Kabul. He won over to his view many other chiefs and the election of Zaman was finally secured by locking up the other princes and their supporters in the building to which they had been summoned. Meanwhile the citizens of Kabul declared Zaman as their king and on 23rd May 1793, public prayers were read and coins struck in his name.

But Zaman was threatened with serious and immediate dangers. For more than six months the fate of the kingdom hung in the balance, there being a number of revolts and rebellions raised by the brothers and nephews of the new king. But Zaman Shah proved a tough opponent and quickly repressed the uprisings with his vigorous measures against them.

### REBELLION BY HAZAR KHAN

Having secured some respite from troubles at home Zaman turned his attention to Kashmir. He had already confirmed Mir Hazar Khan to the governorship, but the latter taking advantage of the uncertain conditions prevailing in Afghanistan following Timur Shah's death, had declared his independence. His father, Mirza Khan, who was sent by Zaman Shah to advise him not to take such a hazardous step, was promptly imprisoned by the impetuous son.

HAZAR KHAN, however, began his independent rule badly. He put Dila Ram Quli to death and let loose a reign of terror against Shias and Hindus. Thousands of innocent Hindus tied up back to back in pairs were drowned in the Dal lake, and there rose wailings and cries of distress from the survivors of the unfortunate victims.

In 1794 Shah Zaman on his march from Peshawar had sent



Ahmad Khan Ishkzai and Rahmat Ullah Khan, son of Juma Khan, with 12,000 men to garrison Attock. Orders were now sent to them to march at once on Kashmir and subdue the rebellious Hazar Khan. In spite of the difficulties they had to overcome, due to the nature of the country, the inclement weather that prevailed and the resistance of the enemy, these chiefs were victorious, and the news of their success, due chiefly to wholesale desertions by Hazar Khan's soldiers, reached Zaman Shah in Peshawar. Hazar Khan sought asylum in Khankah Maula, but was arrested and when after a brief rule of four months, RAHMAT ULLAH KHAN returned to Afghanistan, he took him with himself and presented him before Zaman Shah who forgave him his past offences. Rahmat Ullah Khan took also a Pandit official, NAND RAM TIKKU, with himself. This Pandit took service under Zaman Shah's prime minister, Wafadar Khan and soon rose to the high position of a minister at Kabul. Once when the Shah was engaged in one of the campaigns away from Kabul, and Nand Ram Tikku found the treasury empty, he struck coins in his own name with the inscription of *Sim az M'abud u zarb az Nand Ram*, meaning "Silver from God and coinage by Nand Ram.

Rahmat Ullah Khan was replaced by KIFAYAT KHAN who during his one year of governorship (1794-95) tried to make amends for the misdeeds of his predecessors. Having fully acquainted himself with the pitiable condition of the people of the Valley he went to Kabul after three months to personally report to the Shah, and induced him to waive his exacting revenue demands till normal conditions were restored. During Kifayat Khan's absence, the Bomba incursions and Shia-Sunni riots again disturbed the peace of the Valley, but immediately after his return he took measures to restore normalcy. Kifayat Khan's brief but humane rule was an oasis in the otherwise cruel and despotic desert of Afghan rule in Kashmir.

#### LAWLESSNESS IN KASHMIR

His recall to Kabul was followed by anarchical conditions which lasted for a year. Zaman Shah had conferred the governorship of Kashmir on ARSALAN KHAN (January 1795), who instead of proceeding personally to the provincial capital put his uncle, MUHAMMAD KHAN JAWANSHER, in charge of the administration and collection of revenue. Muhammad Khan's authority was, however, contested by two Afghan officials in Kashmir, namely, KHUDADAD KHAN and MOMIN KHAN. Zaman Shah being at that time pre-occupied with the suppression of a serious rebellion raised by his brother, Prince Humayun, could not send effective aid to Muhammad Khan and the latter after an

unsuccessful skirmish entered into an agreement with them to carry on the administration jointly. The poor Kashmiris had now to meet the exactions of three instead of one master. When after nearly a year Zaman came to know of the bad state of affairs in the Valley (29th Sept. 1795) he deputed Sher Muhammad Khan, Mukhtar-ud-daula, along with Abdullah Khan Alokzai to take over the governorship and punish the insurgents. After a brief struggle the insurgents were crushed and in December Mukhtar-ud-daula placing Abdullah Khan in charge of the government of Kashmir, proceeded to Akora near Peshawar and presented the rebels before Zaman Shah who pardoned them.

#### RISE OF RANJIT SINGH

It was at about this time that another power was rising in the Punjab which had later a direct bearing on the history of Kashmir. The Sikhs, after the death of king Timur Shah Durrani, had practically captured the administration of the Punjab and beaten back the Afghan conquerors across the Indus. Zaman Shah now planned to re-assert his authority in the Punjab which ultimately led to his downfall and the emergence of Ranjit Singh as the most influential Sikh chieftain.

Zaman Shah's forces met no opposition from the Sikh chieftains when they crossed the Indus, and he entered Lahore in January 1797. Although the Afghan sovereign was at the head of 30,000 men, he strove to conciliate the Sikhs and to render his supremacy an agreeable burden to the people there. But he had been only a month in Lahore when he received the information that his brother Mahmud had revolted once more in Herat. He was thus compelled to leave Lahore and effect a retreat to his own country.

After the suppression of the revolt, Zaman Shah in pursuit of his dreams of establishing an empire to the east of the Indus, decided to resume the thread of his policy in the Punjab and in January 1798, he again marched in the direction of Lahore.

The Sikhs fled to the low hills on the borders of the Punjab and the government of Lahore was made over to Ahmad Khan Barakzai. But the king's absence from Afghanistan again encouraged prince Mahmud to raise a revolt and he had to hasten back to Afghanistan. The Sikhs came out of their hidings and overpowered Ahmad Khan Barakzai, the governor of Lahore, who lost his life in battle against them. On receiving this sad news, Zaman Shah advanced on Lahore in the fall of 1798 and without finding any opposition entered Lahore again. In despair of being able to maintain peace with an Afghan governor in the country, the Shah made up his mind to entrust the government to Ranjit Singh. The latter also coveted Lahore, the possession of which

was associated in the minds of all people with the possession of power. And thus when Ranjit Singh was invested by the Shah with the office of governor of Lahore, the Sikh power in the Punjab was established both in fact and in law.

Meanwhile ABDULLAH KHAN was entrenching himself in Kashmir. His rule which lasted for nearly six years was characterised by just and benevolent acts, which resulted in the rehabilitation of the shattered economy of the province.

The Bomba incursions into the Valley were a source of great misery to the people and Abdullah Khan determined to make an end of this menace. He led a strong expedition to crush them and succeeded in forcing their leaders to submission. Subsequently he married the daughter of the Bomba chief, Fateh Khan, and gave him his principality in Jagir. Recruiting a strong force of Bomba tribals he raised the strength of his army which had been depleted by numerous wars and defections. With this strong force he brought the chiefs of the principalities of Poonch and Rajauri to submission.

Abdullah Khan was ably assisted in his humane administration by Pandit Hardas Tikku, the brother of Nandram Tikku who had by then risen to the high post of the Diwan of Wafadar Khan, the prime minister of Zaman Shah. Hardas who kept the Afghan king fully informed of the conditions in the province, reported to his brother about Abdullah Khan's ambition of becoming an independent ruler of Kashmir, and his secret preparations to attain his objective. This created suspicion against the governor and when he was called to Kabul by the king, he was imprisoned, and one of his brothers, VAKIL KHAN, was deputed to Kashmir as governor.

#### ZAMAN SHAH'S FALL

In the meantime events took place in Afghanistan itself which soon led to Zaman Shah's downfall and the ruin of the Sadozai family. The minister Wafadar Khan had offended the Afghan Sardars by his arrogance; and the latter, driven to despair by the complete ascendancy he had obtained over his royal master, formed a plot to assassinate the minister; to remove the king, and to raise prince Shuja to the throne. The plot was, however, revealed to Wafadar Khan before it could be executed, and summoning the conspirators one by one to the presence of the king, dealt severe punishment to them. Most of them were killed, but some managed to escape to Persia where they induced prince Mahmud to try his luck again for the acquisition of the throne of Afghanistan and lead a force on Qandahar.



Lulled to a false sense of security after the suppression of the conspiracy against him, Zaman Shah's ambition again drew him towards the Punjab. In the year 1801-02, he marched from Qandahar at the head of a numerous army for Peshawar and the Punjab.

No sooner had Mahmud heard of Zaman Shah's movement towards Peshawar than he set out with his trusted followers to make an attempt on Qandahar. Immediately the disgruntled elements among the Sirdars and people made common cause with him and after defeating the governor of Qandahar in a battle at Bagh-i-Hurmuz, Mahmud occupied the city turning it into a base for further operations against Zaman Shah.<sup>1</sup>

On learning of Mahmud's success, the king abandoned his projected enterprise in the Punjab and hurried back towards Qandahar. A battle was fought near Kalat-i-Ghilzai, which was decided in favour of Mahmud by wholesale desertions of Zaman's commanders and soldiers. The king then retired to Kabul but finding that his army and treasure were melting away, he repaired to Jalalabad where he invoked the aid of Shuja who was governor of Peshawar. Meanwhile the Qizilbash inhabitants of Kabul delivered the city into the hands of Mahmud and joined him in arms on his advance towards Jalalabad. About thirty-six miles from the latter city, Zaman Shah was utterly defeated. Separated from his men, he and Wafadar Khan passed the night in a ravine. Next morning they made their way to the seat of a Shinwari chief who received the fugitives with a show of respect, but secretly informed Mahmud of their capture and detention in his fort.

Zaman Shah had on his person valuable jewels, the famous KOH-I-NUR diamond and the equally celebrated ruby POKHRAJ. When he found that the treacherous Shinwari had made him a prisoner, the Shah resolved that neither of these gems should fall into his hands, nor into his brother's keeping. The diamond he concealed in a crack in the walls of his chamber and the ruby he threw into a deep irrigation channel.

Mahmud, on learning of the detention of his brother and Wafadar Khan had them brought to Jalalabad where he had Zaman Shah blinded. Wafadar Khan and Zaman Khan Bamzai were put to death.

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1 The abortive campaign against Atta Muhammad Khan and the highly imprudent act at this time of dealing a severe punishment to Abdullah Khan Alokzai, directly affected the fortunes of Zaman Shah, who was deserted by the powerful Alokzai clan by this foolish act.

The services of the force of 15,000 under Kifayat Khan sent to reins ate the authority there would have been invaluable in the King's struggle with Mahmud.

*Cabool* by Mountstuart Elphinstone.

After the overthrow of Zaman Shah in the summer of 1801, the defeated sovereign's camp and treasure amounting to two crores of rupees, fell into Mahmud's hands. He divided the money among his followers and in July 1801 was proclaimed king in Kabul and assumed the title of Shah Mahmud.

### SHAH MAHMUD

With the accession of Shah Mahmud Durrani to the throne of Afghanistan, Atta Muhammad Khan consolidated his position in Kashmir as an independent ruler. Political conditions in the home country were quite uncertain and instable and the rulers in Kabul who were engaged in an internecine warfare could not devote their attention to Kashmir.

Immediately after his assumption of the title of king of Afghanistan, Shah Mahmud had to face a rising of the powerful tribe of Ghilzais, who considered the opportunity too good to be neglected for attempting to assert their claims to supremacy in Afghanistan. The quarrel dragged on for some time, but the Ghilzais were reduced to subjection in the end. In July 1803, however, widespread riots broke out between the Sunnis and Shias. This proved of immense help to Shuja who was aspiring to the throne. The Sunnis of Kabul called him in and Shah Mahmud shut himself up in the citadel of Bala Hissar, where he ultimately surrendered.

Shuja assumed the title of Shah Shuja (July 13, 1803). One of his first acts was to punish the Shinwari chief who had betrayed Zaman Shah. The Koh-i-Nur and the ruby Pukhraj were also recovered.

While the affairs in Afghanistan were in the melting pot following the rising of Shah Mahmud against Zaman in 1801, ABDULLAH KHAN ALOKZAI, managed to escape from detention in Bala Hissar and secretly entered Kashmir, where his brother ATTA MUHAMAD KHAN had on his advice already declared his independence. The few years during which these brothers ruled in Kashmir, were years of distress for the people there, as in 1804 there was a severe earthquake which took a fearful toll of life and property. In 1805 there occurred a devastating flood. Next year the people were taken into the grip of a severely cold winter when rivers and lakes remained frozen for months.

### SHAH SHUJA

In the summer of 1807, Shah Shuja who had moved to Peshawar despatched an expedition under Sher Muhammad Khan Mukhtar-ud-

daula, to reduce Abdullah Khan to subjection. Word was sent to Abdullah Khan to accept the suzerainty of Shah Shuja peacefully, but in his pride, the offer was declined, and he made preparations to meet the invasion. By forced marches, Sher Muhammad crossing the Kishenganga, appeared on the out-skirts of the Valley and defeated the forces of Abdullah Khan near Sopore. The rebel army was scattered and Abdullah Khan shut himself up in a fort in the Valley. Next day Sher Muhammad Khan entered Srinagar and deputed his son, Atta Muhammad Khan, to the reduction of the fort. The siege continued for three months which ultimately ended with the death of Abdullah Khan whose body was carried to Kabul for burial there.

Abdullah Khan Alokzai, who ruled over Kashmir for eleven years, was a just and an able administrator. He gave peace to the province and looked after the well-being of the people. But towards the end of his rule, there was a slackening in administration, due perhaps to his illness, which gave an opportunity to unscrupulous officers to harass the people.

SHER MUHAMMAD KHAN stayed in the Valley for five months to set up an efficient administration and nominating his son, Atta Muhammad Khan, as the governor of the province, retired to Afghanistan.

ATTA MUHAMMAD was an enlightened ruler. He took deep and personal interest in restoring peaceful conditions in the Valley, and rehabilitating its shattered agricultural and commercial structure. He was a patron of learning and art. He used to hear and decide suits personally with scrupulous justice. He would settle all disputes of property on the spot, charging only a rupee from the parties as fees for his torch-bearer. No wonder that he was loved and respected by the people who had been placed under his charge.

Meanwhile Afghanistan was again thrown into the cauldron of civil war. In 1808 there was a rebellion raised by the governor of Kabul, prince Kaisar, and Mukhtar-ud-daula, the father of Atta Muhammad Khan was killed in fighting there. The ex-king Mahmud and other princes in the Bala Hissar fort managed to escape and set up their headquarters at Farah. He then marched on Kabul which was again surrendered to him by the Qizilbash tribes. Shuja who was in Peshawar set out towards Jalalabad to give him battle.

Atta Muhammad Khan thus found the time opportune to declare his independence. But Shah Shuja set to work at collecting as many men as possible for an attempt at crushing the revolt. An expedition sent under the leadership of Akram Khan Bamzai invaded the province



*via* Muzaffarabad. Atta Muhammad who had recruited his soldiers from among the Kashmiris and tribesmen inhabiting the hilly regions massed his army on the passes below Baramula. Akram Khan Bamzai was a brave man, but his avarice, haughty and irritable disposition had rendered him unpopular. His expedition was, therefore, a complete failure. The royal troops were unable to advance and Akram Khan for fear of being seized by his own men and delivered to the enemy, took to flight and reached Peshawar where the remnants of his forces followed him shortly after.

An experienced commander himself, Atta Muhammad Khan was not carried off his feet by this victory. He knew well that he would have to face a stronger invading force as soon as the events in Afghanistan took a steadier turn. He, therefore, began building up arms and ammunition stores and constructing fortifications on the passes leading into the Valley. He built a strong fort on the Hari Parbat hill to defend the city. To gain the goodwill of the people, he struck coins in the name of Sheikh Nur-ud-din, the patron-saint of Kashmir. The instable conditions prevailing in Afghanistan left him undisturbed from that quarter and he had thus enough time to prepare himself for the final round.

Meanwhile Mahmud Shah with the help and advice of Vazir Fateh Muhammad Khan, had driven out Shuja after several bloody battles to the Punjab where he was given asylum by Ranjit Singh. Mahmud Shah entrusted the government of Afghanistan to Vazir Fateh Muhammad Khan, and abandoned himself to self-indulgence, resigning gradually his authority to his minister. In 1812 Vazir Fateh Muhammad met Ranjit Singh and it was arranged that the latter would permit the Afghans to march by the Bhimber route to Kashmir, and aid them in taking possession of the Valley in the name of Mahmud Shah. In return for his assistance Ranjit Singh was to receive one third of the revenue (rupees eight lakhs) annually from the Afghan governor of Kashmir.

Atta Muhammad Khan was fully apprised of these moves by his secret agents at the Afghan court. To counteract these, he sent emissaries to Shah Shuja, then living under the protection of Ranjit Singh, and invited him to Kashmir with the promise that should Fateh Khan's forces be defeated, he would be restored to the throne of Kabul. Shah Shuja was easily taken in, and travelling by unfrequented passes reached Srinagar long before Fateh Muhammad Khan could mount his invasion of Kashmir. Atta Muhammad promptly put him under detention in the fort at Hari Parbat.

Earlier, Atta Muhammad had made another diplomatic move.

He had sent his trusted commander, Jahandad Khan, at the head of a force of three thousand soldiers to occupy the Attock fort for him. And when Fateh Khan approached the Kashmir frontiers to launch his attack, his advance was halted by the resistance offered by the garrison of the fort. It was then that he approached Ranjit Singh for help.

A strong contingent of ten thousand Sikh soldiers under the command of Diwan Mukham Chand was despatched by the Maharaja to the assistance of Vazir Fateh Muhammad Khan. On arrival at the foot of the Pir Panjal pass the combined Sikh and Pathan armies were met by the forces of Atta Muhammad Khan. A furious battle ensued but ultimately Atta Muhammad's forces were defeated and he had to retreat in disorder to Srinagar. Here he brought out Shah Shuja from detention and they together gave a stiff battle to the Vazir's army. But there was treachery and defection in the ranks of Atta Muhammad's army and both he and Shuja had to retreat behind the protecting walls of the Shergarhi Fort.

Atta Muhammad Khan and Shuja, however, eluded capture. They secretly communicated with Diwan Mukham Chand and won him over with the promise that Shah Shuja would give the Koh-i-Nur, and Atta Muhammad Khan the fort of Attock which was in his possession, to Maharaja Ranjit Singh if they were only saved from falling into the hands of Vazir Fateh Muhammad Khan. Thereupon Diwan Mukham Chand stopped further operations against Atta Muhammad Khan. Both the latter and Shah Shuja then came over to his side. He thus struck a double bargain. As Vazir Fateh Muhammad's mission to Kashmir had proved successful he took eight lakhs of rupees, as the first instalment of tribute, from him and then left the country, taking Atta Muhammad Khan and Shah Shuja under his protection. The former surrendered the fort of Attock and the latter the famous Koh-i-Nur to Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

#### END OF THE AFGHAN RULE

After a stay of a few months VAZIR FATEH MUHAMMAD KHAN put his brother AZIM KHAN in charge of Kashmir, and himself left for Peshawar. On the way he tried to win back the fort of Attock which had already been handed over to the Sikhs by the commander under orders of Atta Muhammad. Aided by his brother, Dost Muhammad Khan, he launched an attack on the Sikh garrison, but was defeated in the action fought on the 13th July, 1813.

In Kashmir Muhammad Azim Khan began his administration well. He appointed experienced and influential nobles like Sahaj Ram Dhar and Diwan Har Das Tikku to high administrative posts and

organised his fiscal and judicial administration on more humane lines. In view of the fighting between the forces of his brother and those of Ranjit Singh at Attock, he stopped payment of the second instalment of eight lakh rupees to the Sikhs.

This enraged Ranjit Singh and in order to force Azim Khan to honour the agreement, he sent a strong Sikh contingent to invade Kashmir. To boost up the morale of his troops he moved his own camp to Poonch to be on the spot to supervise the campaign. "Crossing the Pir Panjal range, Ranjit Singh's army marched to Hurapur, where they found numerous Afghan and Kashmiri forces collected and gave them battle. During the fight, so violent a fall of rain took place that it caused an inundation and the cold being very intense, disheartened the Punjabis so much that they were defeated ; three of their high officers being killed."<sup>1</sup> The Sikh army retreated in disorder and being pursued by the Afghan cavalry were mercilessly cut down. Ranjit Singh on hearing this sad news hastily retired to Lahore.

Azim Khan got elated by this victory. He, however, suspected that the Sikh army had been sent by Ranjit Singh at the secret instigation of the Hindus and some Muslim nobles of Kashmir and to satisfy his thirst for revenge, put Diwan Har Das Tikku to death and persecuted the Hindus in general. The Jagirs of several Muslim nobles were resumed. To add to the miseries of the people there occurred a severe famine in the year 1814.

In Lahore Shah Shuja after having parted under pressure with the Koh-i-Nur to Ranjit Singh, eluded the vigilance of his guards, and slipped out of Ranjit Singh's hand early in 1815. Instead of following the road to Ludhiana, where the ladies of his harem had already taken refuge under the British, he made his way to the north and with the aid of the Raja of Kishtwar very nearly succeeded in an attempt at the conquest of Kashmir, but was driven back by the forces of Azim Khan and by exceptionally severe weather. After a variety of adventures, he reached Ludhiana in 1816 where he joined his family and the blind Shah Zaman.

Meanwhile conditions in Kashmir were going from bad to worse. Azim Khan's repressive measures resulted in a sharp fall in revenues, and to set the administration in order, he again called for the help of Hindu officials. He appointed Birbal Dhar, Mirza Pandit Dhar and Sukha Ram Safaya to responsible posts, entrusting to them the collection of the State revenues.

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<sup>1</sup> Kanhayya Lal, *Zafar-nama-i-Ranjit Singh*, English trans. by E. Rehatsek in the *Indian Antiquary*, Vol. 17, Jan. 1888, p. 18.



KASHMIRIS INVITE RANJIT SINGH

Unfortunately there was a failure of crops, and Birbal Dhar's collection fell short by a lakh of rupees. The Khan at once put a hundred Qizilbash troops round Birbal's house to prevent his escape to the Punjab. Two or three days later, Azim Khan enquired from Mirza Pandit Dhar, Birbal's uncle, whether Birbal was planning to escape. Mirza Pandit replied in the negative and offered to stand a surety for him and gave a written bond to that effect. In the evening Mirza Pandit Dhar called his nephew and informed him of his having executed a bond to the Sirdar for his custody and told him that if he had actually made up his mind to escape and deliver the country of the iron yoke of the Afghans which had weighed so long upon them, by going to and inducing Maharaja Ranjit Singh to take Kashmir, he might hasten up and go the same night. Birbal, leaving his wife and daughter-in-law concealed in the house of a Muslim, Qudus Gojawari, through Wasa Kak Harkarabashi, ran away on horseback to the foot of the Devasar Pass the same night and thence, taking his son Raja Kak with him, crossed over with the help of Zulfiqar and Kamgar, the Maliks or Wardens of the Pass. Reaching Jammu he met Raja Gulab Singh, who treated him well and sent him to Lahore with a letter of introduction on his brother, Dhyani Singh. At the present time, when there are smoothly metalled roads to allow motor cars to purr and hum along pleasantly, it is difficult to imagine how much hardship and privation Birbal and his son must have suffered in marching over long and rugged hilly tracts and then over the plains. When Azim Khan came to know of the escape of Birbal Dhar he called Mirza Pandit and shouted angrily :

*Birbal kuja raft ?* "Where has Birbal gone ?"

Mirza Pandit—*Hargah au ra hawas-i-dunya na munda bashed ba Ganga khwahad raft warnah peshi Ranjit rafta Singhan bar tu arad.* "Should he care no more for the world he will go to the Ganges; otherwise he will go to Ranjit and bring Sikhs against you."

Sirdar—*Pas chi salah ?* "What to do then ?"

Mirza Pandit—*Kushtani Mirza Pandit.* "Put Mirza Pandit to death."

Sirdar—*Bakayati-i-Birbal ?* "What about the outstandings against Birbal ?"

Mirza Pandit—*Ba payi Mirza Pandit !* "To be put against the name of Mirza Pandit !"

The Sirdar was pleased with this bold and manly reply and did no harm to Mirza Pandit. He then pressed Wasakak Harkarabashi to find

out Birbal Dhar's wife and daughter-in-law, recovering a recurring fine of one thousand rupees per day from him till nine days, when Telak Chand Munshi, who was the son-in-law of Birbal Dhar, got a clue of the hiding place of the two ladies from his wife and informed the Sirdar of it. The Sirdar summoned them to Shergarhi. Birbal Dhar's wife committed suicide by taking poison while being carried in a boat to the Shergarhi in order to save herself from being dishonoured, but the other lady was seized and sent to Kabul. Wasakak Harkarabashi was slain by the Sirdar for his failure to produce them. The Maliks Zulfiqar and Kamgar also fell victims to the wrath of the Sirdar who resumed their Jagirs and destroyed their houses.

In the meantime, events in Afghanistan were taking a sinister turn. Shah Mahmud who had succeeded Shuja, with the support of Fateh Khan, the Barakzai Sirdar, ruled ineffectively at Kabul. Mahmud's full brother, known to history as Haji Firuz, ruled in Herat and the Shah had given his daughter in marriage to Firuz's son.

Ere long Fateh Khan and Muhammad thought it desirable to evict Haji Firuz, and the royal troops were set in motion under the leadership of Fateh Khan. The citadel of Herat came easily under the possession of Fateh Khan, but his younger brother, Dost Muhammad, committed an act of gross insult to the daughter-in-law of Firuz, no less a person than the daughter of Shah Mahmud. A chorus of indignation followed from all of any standing and Dost Muhammad fled to Kashmir. The vindictive Sadozais, however, must need have revenge, and Prince Kamran, son of Shah Mahmud, seized Fateh Khan on the pretext that he was responsible for this insult, and with his own hands put out the Vazir's eyes with a dagger. This cruel deed at once turned the whole of Barakzai tribe and influence against the Shah, and civil war broke out.

Vazir Fateh Khan sent word to his brother, Azim Khan, to return to Kabul at this critical juncture, and accordingly Azim despatched his harem, and treasure worth more than a crore of rupees, under the charge of Sahaj Ram Dhar, to Kabul in advance of his own departure a month later in 1819, leaving his younger brother, Jabbar Khan to rule over Kashmir.

Jabbar Khan, destined to be the last Afghan governor, was a simple and just man and would probably have proved a successful ruler, had not the political upheavals in Afghanistan and the Punjab, abruptly terminated his rule after only four months.

JABBAR KHAN was once told by someone that it was a common notion among the Pandits that snow falls invariably on the *Shivaratri*

night (13th of the dark fortnight of Phalguna). To test this, he ordered that the Pandits be not allowed to observe this festival in Phalguna (February—March) but in Asarh (June—July). Accordingly it had to be observed on the corresponding night in the latter month. It so happened that even on this night flakes of snow, preceded by a heavy rainfall which had rendered the atmosphere very cold, fell. The Kashmiri bard then, mocking at him, sang—

*Wuchhton yih Jabbar, jandah,  
Haras tih karun wandah.  
Look at Jabbar, the wretch,  
Even Har he turned into winter.*

In the meantime that pioneer of undaunted perseverance, Birbal Dhar, was inducing Maharaja Ranjit Singh to take Kashmir, and the people in Kashmir had their wistful eyes turned towards the Sikhs that they might come and liberate them from the tyrannies of the Afghans. *Deva yiyih Sikha raj tarit kyah*—(would that the rule of the Sikhs would cross over to us)—was then the popular lullaby of the mother to set her child to sleep. When it became known that Sirdar Azim Khan had left Kashmir, Birbal Dhar undertook the responsibility of paying any amount of loss incurred by the Maharaja if his troops failed in the invasion of Kashmir, keeping his son, Raja Kak, as a hostage for the security of the performance of his engagement. The Maharaja then sent over 30,000 troops in charge of Birbal Dhar to invade Kashmir. The troops were commanded by Raja Gulab Singh, Diwan Chand Misr, Sirdar Hari Singh, Jwala Singh Padania, Hukum Singh and others. A fierce battle ensued at the top of the Pir Panjal in which the Afghans were defeated. Another battle was fought on the plateau of Shopyan and in this Jabbar Khan was wounded and his troops routed. Jabbar Khan hastily fled to Afghanistan and Kashmir fell into the hands of the Sikhs. On receipt of the news of victory of his troops in Kashmir, Maharaja Ranjit Singh bestowed robes of honour and other favours on Raja Kak Dhar and other nobles; Lahore was illuminated for three days.

Thus Kashmir, after a long period of about five centuries, passed again from the rule of the Muslim to that of the Hindu kings.

### MUSLIM RULE—AN APPRAISAL

And there is nothing surprising about it. The tyrannical and rapacious rule of the Afghans could lead only to one result, the end of their authority in Kashmir. The people, irrespective of the religion they professed, were determined to throw off their yoke, and rebellion and revolution were in the air. But without the aid of a powerful army it



was not possible to achieve the objective, Kashmir had been so much trodden down that the later Afghan governors could hold the province with only a small number of Pathan forces. The invitation to Ranjit Singh to come to Kashmir's rescue was dictated by the helpless condition of the people. How and why they were reduced to this plight may be explained by other and deeper causes of the decline and ultimate end of the Muslim rule in Kashmir.

Islam entered the Valley not as a result of foreign invasion, but by a *coup d'etat* from within the country. Its influence and teachings had penetrated into the Valley long before a Muslim king ascended the throne, being carried thither by Islamic missionaries and military adventurers. Happily for the new religion it found a fertile soil there to grow and expand in. The people had been groaning under the misrule of the later Hindu rulers, when trade languished and agriculture was at a standstill. To add to their misery there were the crushing burdens of rites and rituals which the dominating Brahmans had laid upon the common man. The shackles of caste had already been broken by the teachings of Buddhism and the general mass of people did not, therefore, find it difficult to embrace the new faith as preached by the Sufi *dervishes* who projected its social and religious humanism.

The Kashmiris were not, therefore, averse to the rule of Shah Mir and his immediate successors who, to their great relief, gave them a clean administration under which trade revived, agriculture flourished, the burden of taxation was lightened and life and property were rendered secure. In fact under Sultan Shihab-ud-din, the martial traditions of the imperial Karkotas were revived and Kashmir was again respected and feared by the rulers of adjacent territories. These early Sultans did not interfere with the religious beliefs of the people, and in practice continued to stick to the customs and ceremonies of the Hindus. But with the influx of a large number of orthodox Sayyids and doctors of Islamic Law from Persia and Central Asia, a few Sultans like Sikandar came under the influence of their preachings, and adopted impolitic practices like the persecution of the Brahmans. This weakened the rule of the Shah Mir Sultans considerably. It was, however, Sultan Zain-ul-abidin who reversed this policy and under his tolerant and enlightened rule, Kashmir acquired not only power and prestige, but rose to great heights in art and culture. This resulted in a fresh renaissance which with the fusion of old and new elements produced a new type of architecture and music, enriched the Kashmiri language, and above all gave birth to the great Order of the Islamic Rishis of Kashmir, who taught, by example and precept, a tolerant outlook on Life and Nature.

The impact of the Arabic and Persian cultures which followed

the wholesale adoption of Islam in Kashmir, produced profound and far-reaching effect on diet, dress, marriage and morals, art and literature, which is discernable among the people even today. But though the new values were assimilated quickly, the past was not eliminated ; it was allowed to blend with the new. Inter-marriages among the Muslims and Hindus were common ; some of the early Sultans worshipped even idols ; Sanskrit continued to be patronized, and also to be the court language for at least two centuries after the advent of Muslim rule. "The result was the emergence of a society which, though differing from the old, was rooted in Indo-Kashmir traditions. This is evident from a study of the Kashmiri language and literature, religious beliefs and social life."<sup>1</sup>

But the good work achieved by the early Sultans did not continue to grow further under their successors. The society being feudal, the Sultans, like most kings, desired self-aggrandizement. This was opposed actively by the feudal nobility who played a similar role under the Hindu Rajas. The inevitable strife followed, helped by the fratricidal wars among the sons of several rulers, there being no definite custom or law governing the succession to the throne. Kashmir thus became again an arena for the contending kings and pretenders to fight their battles in. Again the unfortunate people had to suffer from heavy taxation instable administration and political chaos, with the consequent destruction of the entire economy of the kingdom.

The chronic stampede for power among the nobles and the warring princes encouraged religious feuds between the Shias and Sunnis. Frequently the Hindus were also dragged into the vortex. This further weakened the kingdom. The expanding empire of the Mughals, therefore, did not find it difficult to bring Kashmir under its hegemony. Kashmir lost its independent status and became a province of the great Mughal empire of India.

The Mughals no doubt ushered in an era of peace and prosperity and broke the isolation of the Valley which subjected it to a further impact of powerful influences from the rest of the country. But by the time their empire entered its period of decline and ultimate fall, Kashmiris had lost their political initiative and were left helpless with their martial spirit crushed out of them. The Kashmiri ruling families of Chaks, Magreys and Dars, had been replaced by Mughal officers and the local army disbanded. No wonder the Valley fell easily into the hands of the Afghan king, Ahmad Shah Abdali, there being no person or institution powerful enough to take over the responsibilities of

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1 Hassan, *Op. Cit.*, p. 274.

administration and authority as was the case in other provinces. The Kashmiris had thus to suffer inhuman cruelties whose evil effect continued to sap their vitality for a long time after.

But though persecuted and treated as chaff by many an unscrupulous king and conqueror, the Kashmiris stuck fast to their humanistic principles, and did not fall a prey to religious intolerance and narrow-minded bigotry. The flame of learning and culture was assiduously kept alight by several scholars and savants. Even in the darkest days of political instability, Kashmir did not cease to bring forth literary gems in Sanskrit, Persian and Kashmiri languages. Nor did their deft fingers stop to enrich the world of art with their beautiful architecture, their shawls, exquisite wood carvings, colourful pieces in papiermache and numerous other handicrafts.



## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### A SOCIO-ECONOMIC SURVEY

"THE ADOPTION of Islam by the great mass of the population," observes Stein, "which became an accomplished fact during the latter half of the fourteenth century but which probably began already towards the close of the Hindu rule, did neither affect the independence of the country nor at first materially change its political and cultural conditions."<sup>1</sup>

The political boundaries, the administrative system—both civil and military—remained unaltered for at least two centuries after the accession of Shah Mir to the throne. It was only towards the middle of the Sultanate that we find some changes appearing in the political, social and administrative institutions of the kingdom.

While studying the economic and social structure prevailing in medieval Kashmir, one is again confronted with the paucity of material on the subject, particularly about the period covered by the rule of the Sultans. There is, however, better and more detailed data available on the Mughal period, but the conditions prevailing under the Afghans are shrouded in darkness, as there is very scanty material available on the brief period of their rule.

### POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The political geography of Kashmir did not undergo any material change from that obtaining during the time of later Hindu rulers. The hill states surrounding the Valley maintained their independent status, being occasionally reduced to vassalage during the time of stronger rulers. As such we have to concentrate on the study of the social and economic conditions of the people living in the Valley proper alone.

The political relations between the Valley and the neighbouring hill states, however, underwent a definite change during the Mughal period, when Kashmir became one of the Subhas of the vast empire. But even with their unlimited resources and military might, the Mughals were not able to bring the several rajas of the hill states of

<sup>1</sup> Trans. of the *Raj.*, Vol. I, p. 130.

Jammu under complete subjugation, nor were Ladakh and Baltistan definitely incorporated in the empire. The political isolation of the surrounding territories hampered the free economic intercourse among the inhabitants of these regions and of the Valley.

The territory of Lohara or modern Poonch, Rajauri and the Jhelum valley below Baramula, had formed a part of the Kashmir kingdom and had been administered directly by the later Hindu kings. With the advent of Muslim rule, these areas became independent, and various expeditions were despatched by powerful Sultans like Shihab-ud-din, Qutb-ud-din and Zain-ul-abidin to secure the submission of the chiefs of these principalities. But with the outbreak of internecine wars in the Valley, these hill tribes reverted to an independent status. Several times in fact these petty chiefs played a prominent part in fomenting trouble in the Valley by extending help to one party against the other ; several times the various pretenders to the throne of Kashmir recruited their armies from the inhabitants of these regions.

During the Afghan rule in the 18th and the beginning of the 19th centuries, the Khakha and Bomba tribes of the Jhelum valley below Baramula and of the Kishenganga valley established their own independent chiefships and led marauding expeditions into the northern districts of the Valley. It was with great difficulty that the governors were able to push them back to their hilly homes.

Relations with principalities lying to the east, south and west of the Valley were on a different footing. After the death of Sikandar, the frontier area of Ladakh reverted to an independent status. So was the case with Kishtwar and Baltistan. But various expeditions sent to these territories by powerful Sultans like Zain-ul-abidin, resulted in these territories becoming tributary to the Kashmir kingdom. Their chiefs looked upon the Sultan as their suzerain to whom they had to pay a rich and regular tribute, and whose court they had to attend at his coronation and to whom they had sometimes to give their daughters in marriage. "In return for their undertaking to supply troops in case of war, they enjoyed complete freedom in their administration. During the reigns of weak Sultans, the chiefs invariably asserted their independence and withheld payment of tribute."<sup>1</sup>

The political isolation of Kashmir extending for centuries was, however, broken by the Mughal conquest of the Valley in 1586. Before that, Kashmir was an independent kingdom, self-sufficient to a great extent and cut off from the world by the snowy mountain walls. During the Mughal period improved road communications were established and

*serais* were built for travellers. Political unity with the rest of the country and the visits of the Mughal emperors made Kashmir part and parcel of India. This had great economic consequences.

“Akbar’s conquest”, writes Dr. Stein, “marks the commencement of modern history of Kashmir.....Though the conservative instinct of the population was bound to maintain much of the old tradition and customs, yet the close connection with a great empire and the free intercourse with other territories subject to it necessarily transformed in many ways the political and economic situation of the country.”<sup>1</sup>

Under the brief Afghan rule also, Kashmir’s political destiny was linked with that of the kings of the Durrani dynasty of Kabul. Although the people of Kashmir were too much engrossed in their own troubles, and had no inclination or incentive to come closer to the ruling class and their country, yet the frequent *corvee* levied on them to carry the baggage and supplies for the invading or defending armies took them out of the secluded Valley to the plains of the Punjab and the hilly tracts of Afghanistan. Moreover, the recurring famines and political tyrannies also forced a large proportion of the population out of Kashmir to settle in various towns and cities in the rest of India. This too produced economic consequences of a far-reaching character.

#### TOWNS AND CITIES

Kashmiris are not, migratory by nature and therefore the majority of villages and hamlets, towns and cities, have been in existence at the places they stand on today. Several new towns and cities were founded by some of the Sultans, and some by the Mughal emperors too.

Sultan Jamshed (1342-43) founded the town of Jamnagar in the Advin Pargana. Sultan Alau-ud-din (1343-54) founded the town of Alaudinpura near Srinagar which he beautified with spacious buildings and bazars. Qutb-ud-din founded a small town adjacent to the then city of Srinagar. Qutbdinpura, as the new town came to be known, was the seat of a college and *Khanqah* or hospice. Sultan Sikandar, his son, is recorded to have similarly founded a town on the eastern bank of the Jhelum, which was called Sikandarpura and is now known as Nauhatta. Modern Shadipur near the confluence of the Jhelum and the Sindh rivers, owes its existence to Sultan Shihab-ud-din. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, besides building numerous canals, bridges and gardens also founded several towns and villages, notably Zainagir near the Wular lake, Zainakot and Zainapura.

1 Intro. *Rajatarangini*, p. 131.



During the Mughal period also we learn of several cities and towns having been founded by Akbar, Jehangir and Shah Jehan. Akbar built his city round the Hari Parbat hill, and fortified it with a huge bastioned wall, calling it Nagar Nagar. There were several buildings and gardens of enormous size and beautiful design put up in the new city. Of particular notice was the palace known as Jarogh-i-Shahi and the gardens surrounding it. Though we have no direct evidence of any city being founded by some of the emperors, the importance which they gave to the towns and cities of their liking may well be said to have actually given them their existence. Thus Verinag acquired the status of a city under Jehangir who loved the spot and spent most of his time there during his frequent sojourns in Kashmir.

We have, however, no mention of the founding of cities and towns by the Afghans, except, perhaps, one by Amir Khan Jawansher.

Throughout the medieval period, Srinagar, as usual, continued to be the seat of government. Kota Rani made Andarkot near Sumbal, ten milis below Srinagar, as her capital and so did Sultan Alau-ud-din. Being protected by the waters of the Wular which surrounded the town, the fortified city of Andarkot offered an excellent site for putting up defence against an enemy.

There were other important towns as well. At the foot of the Pir Panjal pass on the route from the Punjab to Kashmir, Hirapur near Shopyan acquired importance as the first city of note in the Valley. Besides being the centre of fruit and grain trade, it was the scene of numerous bloody battles which decided the fate of several kings and ruling dynasties. A similar importance was attached to Baramula the chief city at the entrance to the Valley from the Jhelum valley and Tosamaidan passes. Bijbihara and Anantnag were in a prosperous condition throughout the medieval times. Pampur, Khoihama and Paraspur were also towns of importance.

#### THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

It is not possible to give exact figures of the number of people inhabiting the Valley during the medieval period, as there is hardly any reference to a census having been taken at any time. We are told by some of the Chroniclers that the Valley was thickly populated and judging from the number of deserted villages existing till recent times and also extensive irrigation canals, wells and tanks, and the cultivation of land on seemingly inaccessible parts of mountains round about the Valley, the statement is not far from the truth. The *Zafar-nama*, for

instance, mentions that the land was thickly populated,<sup>1</sup> and so does Abul Fazal speak of the country's "numerous population."<sup>2</sup>

In the Mughal period, however, it appears that a rough census of the Valley was conducted by Saif Khan in or about 1670 A.D. According to it there were 1,243,033 souls in Kashmir including 90,400 infantry and 4,812 cavalry.<sup>3</sup> Excepting this there is practically no record of the population of the country. Travellers like Bernier do not even mention whether the population was more or less dense than in other parts of India. We can, however, to quote Moreland, "gauge the density of population from the land revenue that was realized" from different parts of the Valley.<sup>4</sup> Military garrisons cannot throw any light on the population statistics because being a frontier province and inhabited by warlike people like the Chaks, Kashmir would have required greater military strength than other provinces in the rest of India. We have therefore to measure the density of population from the revenue returns only. For this we have happily some definite records pertaining to the Mughal period.

From the revenue statistics of Abul Fazal, we find that in the Maraz district the revenue realized was more than in the Kamraz district. Again in Maraz, Vihi Pargana yielded more than either Icch or Brang Parganas. Wular Pargana yielded more than either Phak, Kuther or Mattan. In the Parganas south-east of Srinagar, Advin yielded the largest amount of revenue, Nagam came next and Verinag last of all. In the Kamraz district, Krohen yielded the largest revenue with Bangil following close. Inderkot came last of all.<sup>5</sup> It may be mentioned here that the area covered by the various Parganas was almost equal. We, therefore, come to the following conclusions :

- (a) Maraz district was more populous than Kamraz ;
- (b) in the Maraz district, Vihi, Wular and Advin Parganas were comparatively denser in population than the rest of the Parganas.
- (c) in the Kamraz district, Krohen and Bangil Parganas were more populous than any of the other sixteen.

It may be noted that with slight modifications these results are true of the population of Kashmir even at the present time.

Abul Fazal, Jehangir and Bernier record that Kashmir was full of

1 Sharaf-ud-din Yazdi, *Zafar-nama*, ii, 177-8.

2 *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii 353.

3 *Tarikh-i-Hasan*, MSS.

4 *India at the Death of Akbar*.

5 *Ain-i-Akbari*, translated by Jarret.

fields of green crops and that little of the land was left uncultivated. On the other hand, there is no record to show that grain was exported to places in the rest of India. This shows that the population of Kashmir was dense to the full productive capacity of the Valley. Again, Abul Fazal says, "Notwithstanding its numerous population and the scantiness of the means of subsistence, thieving and begging are rare".<sup>1</sup> The remark indicates that the population of the Valley was denser than many parts in the rest of India. Secondly, we may infer that the Valley must have been overpopulated because notwithstanding the thorough cultivation of land and the absence of exports of grain, "the means of subsistence were scanty." This conclusion is also supported by the remark of Bernier about Aurangzeb's visit to the Valley. "That scarcity of provisions may not be produced in the kingdom of Kashmir, the king will be followed by a very limited number of individuals".<sup>2</sup>

The population figures of the Valley seem to have undergone a radical change with the advent of Afghan rule. Political uncertainty coupled with natural calamities like famines and floods resulted in wholesale emigration and death. Though there are no records to show the exact number of people who continued to inhabit the Valley during troublous times, we get a glimpse of it from the diaries of some European travellers who visited the Valley immediately after the end of the Afghan rule. Moorcraft records that whereas the population of the city of Srinagar, although much diminished, was very numerous, yet at the same time the villages and small towns were deserted, people having either migrated to the capital where there was greater safety or to the plains of India.

This is contrary to the conditions prevailing in the time of the Sultans and Mughals when the population was scattered over in villages and only a small portions of it lived in towns. The number of villages has been variously estimated. "Masudi (*d.* 956) says that the number of villages in the Valley stood between 60,000 to 70,000. According to Sharaf-ud-din Yazdi, in the whole province—plains and mountains together—there were 100,000 villages. The number of villages in the *Lokaprakasa* is placed at 66,063. This is also the oral tradition of the Brahmans throughout the Valley. Jonaraja also gives the figure as 60,000. Dimashqi (*d.* 1327) speaks of Inner and Outer Kashmir, the former containing 70,000 villages and the latter more than 100,000. We can thus safely say that there were between 60,000 and 70,000 villages in Kashmir during the period of the Sultans. The same was the number under early Mughal rulers. The decline in the number

1 *Ibid.*

2 *Travels in the Mughal Empire*, Constable and Smith's edition.



of villages and consequently of the population itself began from the later Mughal or Afghan period".<sup>1</sup>

#### THE CLASSES OF POPULATION

The Muslim element entered into Kashmir during the first quarter of the fourteenth century. Formerly, as noted in Chapter Seven, the population consisted of either Hindu, Buddhist, or Jain. With the influx of Muslim divines and philosophers from Persia and Central Asia into the Valley during the 14th century and after, a material change was brought about in the composition of the population. But though there was a close intercourse between the new converts to Islam and the theologians from foreign countries, links with the past continued to be as strong as ever, for the Kashmiris were tenaciously clinging to old customs and ceremonies. With the exception of Brahmans, most of the people belonging to all other castes slowly embraced Islam. As a result there remained among Hindus only one class, namely, the Brahmans, who continued to follow their traditional calling of government service throughout the period of the Sultanate. The Brahmans were further divided, in the course of time, into two sub-castes of Karkuns and Bhashya-bhatts. Those who studied Persian and entered government service from the time of Zain-ul-abidin onwards, were called Karkuns, but those who clung to their old traditions were known as Bhashya-bhatts.

Many of the converts to Islam, however, continued to bear their old surnames. Kauls, Bhatts, Mantus, Ganais, Rainas and Pandits, were converts from the Brahman caste, whereas Dars, Magreys, Rathors, Thakors, Nayaks, Lons, Chaks came from that of the Kshatriyas. "They retained their old caste rules and even their functions, and inter-marriages between the different groups were exceptions rather than the rule".<sup>2</sup>

Notwithstanding the conversion of several castes and classes among the Hindus to Islam, the social structure as prevalent during the time of the later Hindu kings continued to remain intact. During the time of the early Sultans the Damaras who played such a prominent role in the politics of the kingdom, continued to flourish, though under a different religious and social label. The activities of Magreys, Rainas, Chaks and Dars bear close resemblance to those of the feudal lords of the later Hindu period.

At the head of the social structure stood the Sultan and his family. Next came the feudal nobles who held titles, privileges and

1 Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 252.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 226.

Jagirs which were hereditary. Most of these nobles were men of culture and wealth and patronized learned poets, artists and saints at their seats. There is evidence of their building religious edifices and pleasure houses and gardens. But most of their time, energy and wealth were frittered away in political intrigues against one another, the king, or a pretender to the throne. This scramble for power among the barons led to untold sufferings for the people.

There entered another important element into Kashmir during the rule of the Sultans—the Sayyids and nobles from Persia and Central Asia who were received with respect at court. They were granted Jagirs and subsidies and enjoyed privileges and power. This led to a sharp cleavage among the two sections of the nobility—the indigenous and the foreign—which resulted in frequent civil wars and family feuds. It was not till nearly the end of the Sultanate that these foreign elements got finally merged with the indigenous people.

The Sultans and the nobles entered into matrimonial relations among themselves. From political considerations the Sultans also entered into matrimonial alliances with the Rajas of Jammu, Kishtwar, Rajauri, Pakhli and Sind. Although birth was an important factor determining the social status during the medieval period, we have instances where individuals of humble and poor parentage rose by dint of hard work and ability to a high rank.

Side by side with the feudal landlordism, there grew up the religious classes among the Muslim population. The most respected and influential among these classes were the Ulama, who as doctors of Islamic Law and interpreters of religious dogma, were universally respected by the followers of Islam. They functioned as Qazis, Muftis and Sheikh-ul-Islam. Most of the Ulama came from Persia and Central Asia, but soon Kashmiri scholars acquired sufficient mastery over the subject to be able to perform the duties of these offices. Many, after going through a course in Kashmir, went for higher studies at the learned universities of Persia and Central Asia. In fact one of the Kashmiri Ulama became the Supreme Judge or Qazi at the court of Aurangzeb.

Next to the Ulama were the Sayyids who being the descendants of the line of the Prophet, were respected by the kings and their Muslim subjects. They were granted Jagirs and other privileges. Most of them engaged themselves in conducting schools and other cultural institutions, but some like the Baihaqi Sayyids took to politics and created a host of rivals among the Kashmiri nobles. It was after a few generations that their descendants got merged with the indigenous nobility of Kashmir.

It is a unique characteristic of the spread of Islam in Kashmir that the new religion was practised and preached initially by Sufis and saints who led a pious and noble life and mixing freely with the general mass of people converted them to the religion of Islam. The Sufis thus formed a very influential and respected class. It was from among these Sufis that there emerged the Order of the Islamic Rishis, founded originally by Sheikh Nur-ud-din Rishi *alias* Nund Rishi. They built their hospice or *Khanqah*, presided over its management and gave solace and help to people in distress. Though leading lives of self-abnegation, they took active interest in the affairs of the community, and often raised their voice against oppression and injustice.

By the time the Mughals took over Kashmir, the Islamic element in the population had increased considerably. According to *Ain-i-Akbari*, the Hindus were known by the name of Bhattas and they were chiefly concentrated at Srinagar, Vihi, Mattan, Icch, Nagam, Inderkot, Pattan and Telgam. The Muslims, majority of whom were Sunnis, were present in all the Parganas in varying numbers, but were mainly found at Dacchinpara, Zainagir, and Pattan. There were among them many castes such as Khamash, Shawl, Sihar, Bakre, Sansi, Duni and Chaks. There were hill tribes like Thakor and Nayak.

About the economic division of the population, very little is known. The high civil and military official comprised the upper class. There were very few manufacturers and big entrepreneurs, as many of the principal productive trades were State monopolies. Moreland says that there seems to have been no middle class in India during the Mughal period. But in Kashmir the Pandits who were employed in various State departments naturally represented that class. There was besides a class of traders and shopkeepers who can also be counted among the middle class population of medieval Kashmir. The lower class comprised unskilled labourers, shawl weavers, boatmen, gardeners and other groups performing menial jobs. The Candalas, Dombas and Camars stood at the lowest rung of the social ladder. They acted as watchmen and performed menial jobs like the removal of dead bodies of persons executed, or killed in war.<sup>1</sup> They were generally landless agricultural labourers and sometimes enlisted in the army.<sup>2</sup> The shepherds of the Valley formed a distinct class and continue to be such even in modern times, but sometimes they inter-married with the Galwans or horse-trainers. "Slavery, which played such an important part in the social and political life of medieval

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1 Sriv., pp. 192, 274.

2 Jonar., 95; Sriv., 284, 313.



Islam, did not exist on any large scale in Kashmir. It is true that some of the Sultans employed slaves among whom a few rose to occupy high positions in the State ; but there is no evidence in the Chronicles to suggest that the merchants and nobles kept slaves. The institution of slavery was, in fact, looked upon with adhirence by the Kashmiris."<sup>1</sup>

Since the time of Shams-ud-din Iraqi's visit to Kashmir in 1492, the Shia sect of the Muslims came into being and the followers of this faith grew both in number and influence. This had deep but sad influence on the course of the political history of Kashmir for centuries after. Repeated outbreaks of rioting between the Shias and Sunnis and the means adopted by several kings and nobles of either sect to effect the destruction of the other, proved disastrous for the economy of the kingdom, and weakening it considerably, turned it into an inviting prey for several ambitious invaders to attempt its conquest.

### ADMINISTRATION

The administrative structure in Kashmir did not undergo any revolutionary change at the advent of Muslim rule. The system prevalent under the rule of the later Hindu kings continued to be in force for a considerable time. Sanskrit as usual was the court language and the traditional civil servants, the Brahmins, continued in their office undisturbed.

It was as a result of the influx of Sayyids and Islamic missionaries from Persia and Central Asia during the reigns of Qutb-ud-din and his successors that the Muslim administrative system together with its Arabic and Persian designations of offices came into vogue.

The Sultan, like his predecessor the Hindu Raja, was an autocrat. His authority was supreme. He was the law-giver as well as the interpreter of laws, the head of the executive authority and the supreme commander of the royal forces. He could declare war as well as make peace. He was the highest court of appeal and had the power of life and death over his subjects.

The Sultan was, however, assisted in the performance of his kingly duties by a Council of Ministers. They were consulted on all important matters of policy and were entrusted with portfolios to conduct the day-to-day administration of the kingdom. As his ministers were invariably chosen from the powerful landed aristocracy, it prevented his becoming a despot. Except their being a check on the autocratic authority of the Sultan, the ministers were often a source of misery for

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<sup>1</sup> Mohibbul Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 227.

the people, their rivalries and scramble for power leading to frequent internecine wars. Their influence and power in their fiefs naturally prevented the establishment of a strong and stable centralised government. The conditions created by their activities resembled closely those existing under the later Hindu Rajas.

Like them also the Sultans too coined titles and distinguishing marks for themselves. Besides being known as the Sultans, they adopted the titles of *Shah* and *Padshah*. Some of them gave to themselves the titles like Humayun, Nasir-ud-Din Padshah, Ghazi, etc. They held elaborate and pompous assemblies and ascended a gorgeously decorated throne. They wore a royal diadem and were fanned with *Chawries*. They had gorgeous regal robes and minted coins in their own names with a distinctive legend. To give a religious sanction to their power and authority, they had their names recited in the *Khutba* or sermon before the Friday prayers, which was originally the privilege and prerogative of only the Caliphs.

The office of prime minister who wielded wide and exclusive powers and was known as *Sarvadhikara* under the Hindu rulers, continued to be maintained by the early Sultans. The designation was altered probably in the time of Zain-ul-abidin to that of *Wazir*. Like his predecessor, the *Sarvadhikara*, the *Wazir's* position was 'above anybody' and he was directly chosen by the Sultan. He dictated the policy of the State and if the king was weak or ineffective, it was he who exercised the supreme power of the government.

Not only was the *Wazir* the head of the civil administration, he also led the armed forces. Sultan Sikandar's *Wazir*, Suhabhatta, was not only the head of the civil administration, but his commander-in-chief as well. But the combination of the functions of the *Wazir* with those of the supreme commander of the forces was not always essential. During the time of Shihab-ud-din, for example, Udayasri was both the *Wazir* and finance minister, but the command of the forces was in the hands of Damara Candra and Laula. It was only when the rivalries among feudal lords for the capture of the post of *Wazir* became common during the reigns of the later Sultans that the *Wazir* also held the command of the forces to uphold his supremacy and power. Actually the Chaks after their appointment to the post used their power to depose the Sultan and usurp the throne for themselves.

The *Wazir* and other ministers were assigned Jagirs in lieu of their services. Whether in addition to this they received salaries also is not, however, ascertainable from the scanty available records.

During the time of the later Sultans another important ministerial post came into existence, that of the finance minister or *Diwan-i-Kul*. The *Diwan-i-Kul* was in charge of collecting revenues from land and other taxes and to look after the expenditure of the State revenues.

The powers of the *Purohita* or the head of the Ecclesiastical Department had, during the time of the later Hindu Rajas, declined considerably. But with the accession of Muslim kings to the throne, the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*, as the post came to be designated, acquired great power and influence. The *Sheikh-ul-Islam* was not only responsible for the smooth working of the religious institutions and practices in the land, he was also the supreme judge, performed the coronation ceremony of a new Sultan, and was his constant adviser on legal and religious matters. Sometimes he issued political decrees in favour of or against a claimant to the throne or an invader. This naturally carried great weight with the masses. In 1532 for example when Mirza Haider Dughlat invaded Kashmir, the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* issued an injunction to fight the invader, which produced the desired effect of galvanising the nobles and masses to action.

The post of *Sheikh-ul-Islam* came into being during the reign of Sultan Sikandar and seems to have been continued during the Sultanate and the Mughal rule. Under the Chaks, the duties of the *Sheikh-ul-Islam* were taken over by the *Qazi* of Srinagar, also called *Qazi-ul-Quzat*.

The administration of justice was in the hands of the *Qazi*, whose office was first created in Kashmir by Sultan Sikandar. During the Chak period he became the head of the Ecclesiastical Department as well and led the prayers, looked after religious endowments and gave advice to the Sultan on religious matters, besides acting as the chief civil judge. He was assisted by a *Mufti* who gave rulings on cases according to the Hanafite law. A subordinate judicial officer known as *Mir Adl* functioned in every district to decide simple property suits, the more complicated ones being referred to the *Qazi*.

Justice was also administered by the Sultan and the *Wazir* personally in court which was open to all. Hassan Shah Chak, however, had fixed Mondays to hear law suits. The decision of all civil suits was either according to the *Shar'a* or Islamic law or the personal law of the contending parties. Punishments in criminal cases were awarded differently by different kings. Zain-ul-abidin, for instance, did not favour the award of capital punishment even for murder, nor mutilation in the case of theft or robbery. Mutilation as a form of punishment was introduced by Ghazi Shah Chak but was later abolished by Ali Shah.



Other administrative posts during the Sultanate also conformed to the pattern set in the Hindu period, their designations being only changed to Persian. For example, the *Ganjyara* or the treasurer was designated as *Kha:anchi* or *Khazana-dar*, the *Nagaradhipa* as *Kotwal* and *Muhtasib*. The *Kotwal* was the police officer in charge of a town and had to look after the morals of the citizens. He had to maintain law and order and protect the citizens from thieves and robbers. To discharge his duties efficiently he had a police force under him. The *Muhtasib* besides performing the duties akin to those of the *Kotwal* was also responsible for collection of revenues, and had to see that the people in general observed the rules of religious practices. Those who were in default had to be produced before the *Qazi* who alone was empowered to award punishment to the culprit.

As during the Hindu period the Sultans and the Mughals maintained a Central Record Department where all documents pertaining to sale and purchase of property, agreements, contracts and judicial and revenue records were preserved. Besides Srinagar there was a records office at Sopore, the capital of Kamraj. But during the reign of Zain-ul-abidin all the previous records were destroyed.<sup>1</sup>

There were in addition to the above, several minor offices directly under the Sultan. Every department had a secretary called *Dabir*. An important and powerful office was that of the guardian of the crown-prince. There were also the office of the court astrologer and the court physician, both of whom enjoyed the Sultan's confidence.<sup>2</sup> There was also a separate department of music with an officer at its head. The *Purohita* or the Brahman priest was an important person under the early Shah Mir Sultans, but later his importance declined, most of his functions being taken over by the *Sheikh-ul-Islam*.<sup>3</sup>

#### ADMINISTRATIVE DIVISIONS

The traditional division of the Valley into two districts of Maraj and Kamraj already described continued to be maintained during the medieval times. The two districts were under the charge of *Mandalesa* during the Hindu period, whose designation was changed to that of *Hakim* under the Sultans and the Mughals. The office of *Hakim* was generally filled by the royal princes or persons enjoying the confidence of the Sultan. Under the later Sultans when they degenerated into mere puppets in the hands of their ministers, the Valley was divided among three or four feudal lords who were responsible for the

1 Sriv., pp. 155-56.

2 Jonaraja. p. 88.

3 Mohibbul-Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 206.

administration of their respective fiefs. But the general supervision of the kingdom continued to be vested in the *Wazir* who ruled in the name of the puppet Sultan.

The *Hakim* was required to maintain law and order in his district, collect revenue and dispense justice. Each district was sub-divided into several Parganas, under the charge of an officer variously designated as *Tehsildar*, *Kotwal* or *Shaqdar*. We have no record of the exact number of Parganas (*Visayas* under the Hindus) during the reign of Zain-ul-abidin, but according to *Lokaprakasa* there were twenty-seven. It is not certain which time it refers to. Under Muhammad Shah, however, the number of Parganas was twenty-seven, but under Mirza Haider Dughlat it increased to forty. According to Abul Fazal, the number was thirty-eight during Asaf Khan's governorship, but Qazi Ali's settlement earlier showed the number as forty-one. Probably the latter was the number which existed during the rule of the Chaks.

Each Pargana had a number of villages which formed the unit of administration. The village had an accountant or *Patwari*. For maintaining law and order there was a police officer called *Sarhang-Zada*. Under him were the *Dombas* who swept the houses during the day and kept watch in the night. There is no mention of the system of the village *Panchayat* in the Chronicles.

The Sultans were particular in keeping themselves informed of the doings of their subjects, the ministers and officials, through a network of spies. Sometimes they went about incognito to learn of the condition of the people. The spies were recruited from all classes, from nobles to prostitutes. Similarly, queens and nobles had their own agents to keep them informed of the moves and counter-moves of their rivals at court.<sup>1</sup>

During the Mughal period the administrative set-up in Kashmir underwent a drastic change. By virtue of its being one of the Subhas of the Mughal empire, the form of administration was brought in line with that prevailing in the rest of the country. The Mughal administration in India was carried on either as *Kacha* or *Pucka*. *Kacha* administration was one in which the governor (called Subhedar) received pay from the imperial exchequer and submitted the net revenue to the same. The *Pucka* administration meant one in which a favourite of the emperor was appointed the governor of a Subha and he had to pay a certain fixed amount to the emperor, the administration and collection of revenue from the Subha being left entirely in his hands.

1 Jonar., p. 97 ; Sriv., p. 101 ; Hassan, f. 1229 ; Nasib, ff. 205b Sqg.

But in Kashmir the administration was a *Kacha* one. This is amply proved by the appointment of successive governors. The *Pukka* form was, moreover, in vogue chiefly in South India.

The Subha of Kashmir had a varying number of *Sarkars* in the Mughal period. Each of these was in charge of a *Kotwal*. He had to look after the personal security of the people and also to conduct civic duties like sanitation, public works, etc.

The security of the city or towns people was to some extent assured on account of the presence of the *Kotwal* and his police force and the *Mansebdar* (who was in charge of a *Sarkar*) who both had executive and judicial powers. But there is no doubt that many of them took undue advantage of their authority. As Moreland remarks, "bribery was almost universal in India at this time."<sup>1</sup>

The administration of justice under the Mughals was wholly in the hands of the Subhedar who functioned on behalf of the emperor as the supreme judicial authority in his province. He delegated these functions to the *Mansebdar* of each district and Pargana. Kashmiris were, however, fortunate in being able to present their disputes and complaints to the emperors personally when they visited the Valley on holiday. This proved an effective check on the authority of the governor and his subordinate staff.

Under the Afghans, the administrative machinery of the Mughals was allowed to function intact. But it was mostly the personal whims of the governor which ruled supreme. The revenue of the province was in a way farmed out to the governor, who was, in return for a fixed amount of money to be remitted annually to the king at Kabul, given a free hand in the internal administration of Kashmir, and permitted to collect the revenue by any means, fair or foul. It may safely be assumed that under such conditions the administrative machinery was maintained only in name.

### MILITARY ORGANISATION

The military organisation in Kashmir during the medieval times did not appreciably differ in the first years of the Muslim rule from that in the Hindu period. But with the emergence of several powerful nobles and adventurers on the scene, the set-up was considerably altered. For whereas previously the army was under the king or his commander-in-chief, it ceased to function as an independent unit with the ushering in of the Mughal rule in 1586, when Akbar seems to have

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<sup>1</sup> *India at the Death of Akbar.*



disbanded the army of the Chaks recruited chiefly from the Khasas, Rajputs, Sayyids and other warlike tribes.

The army consisted of four categories—(a) the standing army, (b) provincial troops, (3) feudal levies and (4) volunteers. The standing army comprised the cavalry, infantry, the elephant corps and artillery. The standing army was the main support of the king in peace or war. Recruited mainly from the martial tribes of Khasas, Rajputs, Magreys, Chaks, Rainas and others, the army was stationed in Srinagar, and kept ready to follow the Sultan to war. It consisted of foot and cavalry. The horsemen rode ponies bred chiefly on the mountain meadows of Kashmir. These were sure-footed and invaluable in the hilly regions where no wheeled traffic was possible. There were, however, only a few elephants in the army, which though not of great help in the campaigns in hills, were of immense value in battles fought in the plains of India.

The provincial troops stationed in towns and places of strategic importance were kept always ready to meet any invader. For instance every pass leading to Kashmir had a number of forts to prevent the enemy from making a bid for the throne of Kashmir.

The feudal levies, directly under the command of the powerful nobles, were always of doubtful loyalty to the king and so were the armies of the vassal hill chiefs. But in times of grave emergency against an invader, the king had the support of the volunteers who flocked to his banner and were ready to follow in battle in defence of the country.

The weapons carried by the armed forces consisted of a sword, bow and arrows, spear, battle-axe and mace. The soldiers wore coats of mail. The horses were caparisoned with steel. There is, however, some controversy regarding the use of gunpowder and cannon by the Kashmiri soldiers during and after the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. Srivara refers to a weapon, made for the first time in Kashmir in the time of Zain-ul-abidin which "destroys forts, pierces the hearts of men, strikes horses with terror, throws balls of stone from a distance and remains unseen by the soldiers from encampments."<sup>1</sup> Zain-ul-abidin experimented with new metals and their alloys until he found one which was new and hard. With this a cannon was cast and "at his command," says Srivara, "I composed a few lines in praise of the weapon." But because of the difficulty of manufacturing these weapons, their use seems to have been restricted. That is why in his detailed account of the civil war in Kashmir during the reigns of Sultan Muhammad Shah, the

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<sup>1</sup> Sriv p. 36.

Chronicler does not mention the use of cannon or musket. It was only in the time of the later Shah Mir Sultans and Chaks that we come across a mention of muskets and gunpowder in use among the Kashmir army. "Yusuf Shah's army, which was organised to resist the Mughal invasion under Raja Bhagwan Das, is said to have had 7,000 musketeers, but the number appears to be highly exaggerated"<sup>1</sup>

From a closer study of the later *Rajatarangini* of Jonaraja and Srivara, we can have a fairly detailed picture of the mode of fighting during the Sultan period. It appears that the army was composed of five corps: centre, two wings, vanguard and rearguard. Elephants whose number was very limited came in front followed by the cavalry. The armed attack was led by the commander himself, his own pluck and dash going a long way in determining the outcome of the battle. Sometimes there were single combats as a result of a challenge from one side to another. The tempo of the battle rose with the beating of kettle-drums and conches. There does not appear any uniform having been worn by the troops, but each side in the combat had some distinguishing mark. There were banners carried by bearers shouting the battle cry. These banners were invariably of a blood-red colour.<sup>2</sup>

The Kashmiri army commanders took the fullest advantage of the natural defences of the kingdom, its mountains and narrow passes, forests and meadows. They were past-masters in guerilla warfare, and often beat back with heavy losses far stronger armies in numbers and equipment. Yaqub Shah Chak, for instance, dealt severe blows on the mighty Mughal army with only a handful of soldiers.

To make the defences of the kingdom fool-proof, the Kashmiris built forts commanding the passes and garrisoned them with experienced and loyal troops. The importance of these forts for the defence of the kingdom against invasion has already been mentioned. During the Hindu period the passes were controlled by a single officer called *Duarapati* or Lord of the Gate. But in the period of the Sultans, the *Nayaks* were the guardians of the passes and functioned under the Sultan direct. The post of *Nayak* during the Sultanate was generally hereditary, Jagirs being given to them in return for their services. They not only controlled the defence of the passes, but acted as customs officials too. No traveller could come in or leave the Valley without a *Rahdari* or permit from the *Hakim*. The safety of the Valley from foreign invasion thus depended upon the efficiency and loyalty of the *Nayaks*. Whenever the defence of the passes was neglected or the *Nayaks* turned traitors, the Valley was easily invaded.

1 Hasan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*. p.212

2 Jonar., p. 75; Sriv., p. 207.

The royal stable or the cavalry was the mainstay of the armed forces of the king. The Sultan entirely depended upon the loyalty of his cavalry and devoted most of his attention to its proper equipment and the strength of the ponies. Royal claimants to the throne always tried to seize the horses first. Thus we find that Haji Khan, in making his bid for the royal throne at his father's death, first seized the royal stable, which made his rival Adam Khan to despair of the success of an encounter with him and he fled to India. Similarly Ghazi Chak, in order to overthrow Daulat Chak, seized the royal horses.

The accounts pertaining to the armed forces—maintenance of registers of soldiers, disbursement of their salaries, and supply of equipment—was in the hands of an officer called the *Mir Bakhshi*. Under the Mughals he possessed considerable powers and influence, but he does not seem to have enjoyed the same position and prestige under the Sultans. The first mention of a *Mir Bakhshi* in the Chronicles is in the reign of Ali Shah.

From a study of the military exploits of the Sultans of Kashmir, it appears that the people of the land had long and glorious martial traditions. The soldiers of Kashmir were tough fighters both in the hills and the plains. It was in the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-din that Kashmir brought under subjection large territories in the Punjab, Sind and north-western regions of India. Qandahar and Ghazni feared him.

Under Sultan Zain-ul-abidin the Kashmir army won further laurels. He is said to have had 100,000 infantry and 30,000 horse. He was a skilful commander and his army officers had deep faith in his knowledge of military science and love for his charming personality. He extended his sway over the Punjab from Peshawar to Sirhind. He sent his forces to the aid of Jasrat Khokar who thus conquered the rest of the Punjab easily. In the east Zain-ul-abidin attacked and subjugated the kingdom of Tibet.

During the reigns of the later Sultans the military strength of the kingdom was frittered away in internecine warfare with the result that most of the territories tributary to Kashmir threw off their allegiance to it. In fact some warlike hill tribes like those of the Poonch and Rajauri areas and of the Jhelum valley, taking advantage of the fratricidal wars in the Valley, launched marauding attacks on its opulent inhabitants and carried away precious loot. The fighting skill and courage of Kashmir soldiers were amply demonstrated in 1532 A.D. when they forced Mirza Haider Dughlat's Central Asian soldiers numbering more than 5,000 to lay down arms and quit the land by the way they had come. Later in the battle against the Mughal forces of



Babar, Humayun and of Akbar, Kashmiri soldiers gave a good account of themselves.

No wonder Akbar and his successors adopted a policy of systematic suppression of the martial spirit of the Kashmiris. To overawe the people Akbar built the fort round Hari Parbat. "Means were at the same time adopted," says Lieutenant Newall,<sup>1</sup> "of rendering the native Kashmirians less warlike and of breaking their old independent spirit.....Nawab Itqad Khan, who became the Mughal governor in 1622 A.D. was cruel and commenced a systematic destruction of the Chaks, whom he hunted down and put to death. Bands of this fierce tribe still infested the surrounding hills, especially the range of the north of Kashmir, from which strongholds they issued on their predatory excursions. This had the effect of almost exterminating that ill-fated tribe, the descendants of which, at the present day, are the professional horse-keepers of the Valley, and in their character, still, in some degree, display remnants of that ancient independent spirit, which led to their destruction."

After the disbandment of the Kashmirian army, the Mughals posted in the Valley troops from their grand army. But when it was found that all opposition to the imperial government had been crushed, they withdrew a part of their forces and a local militia of 92,400 infantry and 4,892 cavalry were entrusted with the defence of the frontiers on the east and north of the Valley.

By the time the Afghans established their rule in Kashmir, the martial spirit of the people of the Valley had nearly been crushed. But even then they gave a good account of their past traditions and fought Ishk Aqasi's forces till the last. More than 20,000 Afghan soldiers were permanently posted in Kashmir<sup>2</sup> to hold the people in awe and when their spirit was completely broken, Azad Khan could with ease hold the Valley with no more than "three thousand horse and foot, chiefly Afghan."<sup>3</sup>

The martial traditions of the Kashmiris were, however, revived under the Afghan governor Atta Muhammad Khan, when he declared his independence and raised his banner of revolt against the authority of Kabul. He recruited a large army of Kashmiri soldiers to fight the Afghan army which was sent to reduce him. But before the tyrannised Kashmiri could find his feet again, he came under the rule of a new master—the Sikhs.

1 *J.A.S.B.*, No. 5. 1854, p. 433.

2 Hugel, *Travels*, p. 123.

3 Forster, *Journey*, pp. 32-33.

## PUBLIC FINANCES

The financial resources of medieval Kashmir were not different from those of the earlier Hindu period. The main source of income was the demand on agricultural produce. The methods of assessment were sharing, appraisalment or measurement. The general rate of State demand varied during the rule of the Sultans, but assumed uniformity under the Mughals. The Afghans, however, do not seem to have followed any regular pattern of revenue assessment, the exactions from the cultivator varying with the amount the revenue farmer had to pay to the king.

Shah Mir, the first Sultan, on his accession to the throne, fixed the revenue demand at one-sixth of the produce of land,<sup>1</sup> probably the low rate being fixed partly to win the goodwill of the people and partly to rehabilitate the shattered economy of the kingdom. His successors, however, increased the demand to one-third of the produce from land. But in the event of a flood or failure of crops, the State demand was either reduced considerably or remitted altogether. Thus in a famine during Zain-ul-abidin's reign, the demand was reduced to one-fourth, and in some places like Zainagir to one-seventh.<sup>2</sup>

Mirza Haider Dughlat in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* gives an idea of the revenue assessment system. The land was divided into four kinds : (i) *Abi*—cultivated by irrigation, (ii) land not needing irrigation but depending on rainfall, (iii) orchards, and (iv) meadows. Assessment on the first category was heavier than on other types. But lands which depended on rainfall for irrigation were taxed lightly. Land on which fruit was cultivated was exempted from taxation under the Sultans. The Chaks, however, imposed a tax on orchards, but it was abolished by Yusuf Shah. The meadow lands meant for grazing purposes were not taxed at all, since no crops were grown on these.

The system of collection of revenue by the Sultans was identical to that prevailing under the Hindu rulers. Each village was assessed at so many *Kharwars* of rice, and the grain could not be removed from the threshing floor by the cultivator till he paid the share of the State. The State's share was removed to the city and sold to the citizens at fixed prices. This naturally resulted in keeping the prices steady, and prevented the anti-social elements from cornering the grain in times of scarcity.

Before Kashmir came under the sway of the Mughals, the Sultans and the Chaks had fixed two more duties on the people, namely, *baj*

1 Jonar, Munich MS., F. 53b.

2 Sriv., p 156.

and *tamga*. The former was loosely known for any toll or tax. The latter was (a) a demand in excess of the land revenue, or (b) in land tolls.<sup>1</sup> Akbar exempted the people from these two duties. There were only *Sair-i-Jihat* cesses.<sup>2</sup> In the time of Aurangzeb *Jazya* or poll-tax was levied on the Hindus.

The immemorial tradition in Kashmir considered the whole of the land as the property of the ruler. Of some portion of the *Khalsah*<sup>3</sup> land the sovereigns divested themselves by grants in Jagirs for various periods. Though before the country came under the suzerainty of the Mughals, "one-third had been for a long time past the nominal share of the state, yet more than two shares were actually taken."<sup>4</sup> Akbar fixed the share of the State at one-half. The system of revenue collection was by appraisement and division of crops, assessment for crops paying special rates not being the custom of the country.

The settlement of land and the assessment of revenue was undertaken immediately after Akbar's conquest of the Valley. Qazi Ali's assessment which was resented by the people, was arrived at by striking an average of the prices current over several years past. The *Kharwar* in kind was thus ascertained to be equal to 29 *dams*. Of the assessed revenue 901,663 *Kharwars* which in terms of money came to 12,022,183 *dams*, were to be paid in cash and the rest in kind. Todar Mal, however, fixed the revenue at 3,079,543 *Kharwars*, out of which 1,015,330 *Kharwars* were to be paid in cash.

The following table shows the amount of land revenue (in Akbar-shahi rupees) derived from Kashmir in different years :

Year	Revenue	Sarkars	Mahals
	Rs.		
1594 A.D. ( <i>Ain</i> )	1,552,826	1	38
1648 A.D.	3,750,000	...	...
1654 A.D.	2,859,750	...	...
1666 A.D. (Bernier)	3,500,000	...	...
1695 A.D. <i>Dastur-ul-Amal</i>	3,157,125	1	46
1697 A.D.	3,505,000	...	...
1700 A.D.	6,947,125	...	...
1720 A.D.	5,320,502	2	75

1 Jadunath Sarkar, *India of Aurangzeb*.

2 In its original purport, the word signifies moving, walking or the remainder : from the latter it came to denote the remaining or all other sources of revenue in addition to the land tax from a variety of imposts, as, customs, travellers' dues, house-fees, market-tax, etc.—Wilson's *Glossary*.

3 Lands of which the revenue was the property of the government.—Wilson's *Glossary*.

4 *Ain-i-Akbari*.



During the Afghan rule, the system of revenue collection differed essentially in one respect. Generally the revenue was farmed out with, of course, clear instructions from the governor that the State's share of land revenue was to be collected according to the assessment as prevailing during the Mughal days. But it was rarely that these instructions were followed in actual practice. The revenue farmer when pressed to make heavier payments resorted to unjust and cruel exactions from the cultivators. According to George Forster<sup>1</sup> who visited Kashmir in 1783 A.D., a revenue of between twenty to thirty lakhs of rupees was collected from Kashmir, of which a tribute of seven lakhs was remitted to the treasury. A portion of this tribute was transmitted to the Afghan capital at Kabul in shawl goods.<sup>2</sup> The revenue return of Kashmir under Zaman Shah<sup>3</sup> was :

The Treasury	...	Rs. 2,250,000
Taluqdars	...	Rs. 628,000
Establishment	...	Rs. 1,140,000
Total	...	Rs. 4,018,000

#### TAXES OTHER THAN LAND REVENUE

Besides the land revenue there were several other taxes and cesses levied on the people. A notable tax under the Muslim kings was *Zakat* (Poor Tax) which was realized from the Muslims according to the value of their movable and immovable property. The revenue from this tax was considerable, there being a religious injunction for the payment of *Zakat*. The customs duty levied on goods imported into the kingdom was also an important source of revenue.

The *Jazya* on non-Muslim subjects was first levied in the reign of Sultan Sikandar. The revenue derived from this tax was not much, but it was vexatious and iniquitous. Zain-ul-abidin did away with it, and cancelled other discriminatory taxes on the Hindus as for example the tax on the cremation of the dead.<sup>4</sup> Yusuf Shah is said to have abolished the taxes on artisans, cows and gardens and the *Zakat* on boatmen. This proves their existence during the reigns of earlier Sultans.

When the Mughals conquered Kashmir, they claimed to have abolished many of the vexatious taxes like *baj* and *tamga*, the levy of

1 *Journey.*, p. 32.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 21

3 Information based on Ghulam Sarwar's papers preserved in National Archives, New Delhi. Ghulam Sarwar was deputed by the British Government to Afghanistan during 1793-95 A.D. when Lord Cornwallis was Governor-General of India.

4 *Sriv.*, p. 143.

two dams on fuel, poll-tax on the boatmen, and demands of sheep from the villagers.<sup>1</sup>

The Afghans levied a number of taxes both on Muslims and non-Muslims. The first governor Ishk Aqasi realized more than rupees two crores from the unfortunate people, and during Haji Karimdad Khan and Azad Khan's regime heavy taxes like *Zar-i-Ashkhas*, *Zar-i-Dood*, etc. were realized from the rich and the poor. The main object of the Afghan governors was to extort as heavy a tribute from the people as possible. Azim Khan, one of the last governors, carried away more than a crore of rupees in cash and jewellery to his home in Afghanistan.

Here we may mention that during the time of the early Sultans another important source of revenue was the tribute and *nazrana* from Jagirdars and feudatory princelings. A considerable amount was also realized in war indemnity and tribute following military expeditions to the Punjab and north-western provinces of India.

The main items of expenditure were the army and the civil services particularly during the time of the Sultans. The Mughal army and the civilian staff stationed in the province were also paid from the local treasury. A change in the mode of payment to the soldiers by Qazi Ali resulted in a rebellion. The Afghan governors also paid their soldiers stationed in Kashmir from the revenues of the province.

Expenses on the household of the Sultan, or of the governor, his court and a large retinue also seem to have been considerable. We can gauge their extent from the fact that one-third of the total revenues was allotted to some of the weak Sultans by their *Wazirs* to run their household and maintain a pompous court.

Expenditure on public utility and social services like education, hospitals and free kitchens, was also quite heavy. The Sultans maintained schools and colleges, charitable dispensaries and in times of scarcity gave free food to the famished people.

Road building and other public works were also important items of State expenditure. We learn of poplar avenues and gardens laid out by the Mughal and Afghan governors. They also built bridges and travellers' rest houses. Zain-ul-abidin and some Mughal governors built irrigation canals. Religious endowments like *Khanqahs*, mosques and poor houses also claimed a share of the State revenue.

Most of the Sultans and Mughal governors were patrons of art and literature and we learn of several poets and literateurs receiving pensions and stipends from the rulers.

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii, 367.

## AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The condition of agriculture and of the peasant was deplorable during the time of the later Hindu kings when there was anarchy and instability in the land due to internecine wars and foreign invasions. It was only during the short rule of Shah Mir that a semblance of orderly government was restored and attention paid to the cultivation of rice and other crops.

Rice, the staple food of the people of the Valley, was extensively cultivated as before. It continued to be the chief crop grown during both the Mughal and Afghan rule. "Though *shali* (rice) is plentiful," remarks Abul Fazal, "the finest quality is not available." Wheat and *mung* were also cultivated, but gram and barley were not. Some portions of land were artificially irrigated. The numerous rivulets and springs supplied water to the rest of the fields. The Valley did not wholly depend upon rains for irrigation. Canals constructed by Zain-ul-abidin at Zukru and Mattan were fed from perennial rivers, the Sindh and the Lidder. "From the sides of these mountains gush forth innumerable springs and streams of water which are conducted by means of embanked earthen channels even to the top of the numerous hillocks," writes Bernier.

Again, "the numberless streams which issue from the mountains maintain the Valley and the hillocks (*Karewas*) in the most delightful verdure. The whole kingdom wears the appearance of a fertile and highly cultivated garden."

Saffron was cultivated chiefly at Pampur where from ten to twelve thousand *bighas* of land were under cultivation during Akbar's time. There were some saffron fields at Paraspur as well. The method of cultivation is given very graphically by Jehangir in his Memoirs. There was a curious superstition then in existence. When the cultivation began, the farmers worshipped at the Zewan spring (near Pampur) and afterwards poured cow's milk into it. If as it fell, it sank into water, it was considered a good omen and a plentiful crop was expected; but if unfortunately it only floated, the peasants considered it an indication of bad luck.

In the *Waqyat-Jehangiri*, it is asserted that in an ordinary year 400 maunds of saffron were produced. Half belonged to the State and half to the cultivators.

During the time of Akbar the price of Kashmir saffron was from Rs. 8/- to Rs. 10/- per *Seer* (2 lbs.) and in Jehangir's time also about the same.



Water-melons and vegetables were cultivated on the floating gardens of the Dal. Water-melons of Kashmir were so famous for their juice and taste that the Mughal emperors had them taken to Agra for their table.

Kashmir produced a great variety of fruit in abundance. They were much better than the tropical fruits of the plains of India. Besides plum and mulberries there were "melons, apples, peaches and apricots which are excellent", remarks Abul Fazal. Though grapes were in plenty, finer qualities were rare. Bernier is all praise for the fruits of Kashmir. "The whole ground is enamelled with our European flowers and plants and covered with our apple, plum, apricot and walnut trees all bearing fruits in great abundance. The private gardens are full of melons, radishes, most of our potherbs and others with which we are unacquainted." But as compared to the French varieties they were rather inferior. "The fruit is certainly inferior to our own," continues Bernier, "nor is it in such variety ; but this, I am satisfied, is not attributable to the soil, but merely to the comparative ignorance of the gardeners, for they do not understand the culture and grafting of trees as we do in France."<sup>1</sup> He was, however, certain that with the introduction of better grafts from foreign countries and by paying more attention to planting and soil, the Kashmir fruit would attain the same degree of perfection as the French.

However, in 1590 A. D. Muhammad Quli Ifshar, the *Daroga* of the gardens, first of all grafted Kashmir fruit trees with peaches brought from Kabul. The experiment succeeded and grafting has since then been widely practised. Zaffar Khan Ahsan the governor under Shah Jehan also improved the quality and taste of the cherry, plum, peach, and grapes by using better grafts and planting imported saplings from Persia and Kabul.

The villagers kept bee-hives. The honey was exported to the rest of India. Milk and butter were in abundance and though Kashmir cows were smaller in size than the cows in India, they yielded a larger quantity of milk.

The importance of irrigation from a revenue point of view must have always been recognised by the rulers of the country. We have already noted the important irrigation projects completed during Lalitaditya and Avantivarman's reign. In the medieval times too we find every respite from internal troubles marked by repairs to ancient canals or the construction of new ones. The long and peaceful reign of Zain-ul-abidin seems in particular to have been productive of impor-

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1 *Travels*, Trans. by Conctable and Smith, p. 397.

tant irrigation works. Jonaraja's and Srivara's Chronicles give a considerable list of canals constructed under this king.<sup>1</sup> Among these the canal which distributed the water of the Pohar river over the Zainagir Pargana and the one by which the water of the Lidder was conducted to the arid plateau of Martand, deserve special mention. Of the smaller canals built to serve mainly as communication channels, the Lachhamkul and Mar are worth notice. The former carried water for drinking and other purposes to Zain-ul-abidin's new town of Naushahr from the Sindh and was extended to the Jama Masjid and then emptied itself into the Mar canal. The latter was dug through the old city of Srinagar and carried a portion of the surplus waters of the Dal lake to as far as Shadipur at the confluence of the Jhelum and Sindh rivers.

We have no record of any new canals having been built by the Mughals, but they seem to have repaired the older ones. Their love for gardens and springs resulted in building of tanks round the springs and of water channels to feed the fountains and cascades, which resulted incidentally in increasing the irrigation facilities for the cultivators.

The Afghan rulers were not very much interested in works of public utility, but we have mention of a canal being built by Amir Khan Jawansher to link the Dal and Anchar lakes. The canal still bears his name.

## NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

Kashmir has large tracts of forest-land from time immemorial and it is chiefly on account of this that wood has been so cheap there. No consideration, however, seems to have been given to the conservation and proper use of forests. They were considered the property of everyone and were freely exploited. Had it not been for the extensive tracts of forest, Kashmir would have by the end of the medieval period become devoid of this natural gift. Travellers to Kashmir were struck by the vast quantity of timber used for building and other purposes. Mirza Haider Dughlat remarks that the houses were all made of timber. "The houses are all of wood," wrote Abul Fazal. Similar remarks have been made by Bernier.

Geologists have asserted that Kashmir is rich in mineral wealth. During the medieval times we have mention of a copper mine being exploited by Zain-ul-abidin. Under the Mughals the iron mines of Shari and Anantnag yielded metal enough for the manufacture of agricultural implements. There was a quarry of agate and onyx near the

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1 See, Jonar, 1141-55, 1257 Sq; Sriv., 1-414 sq.

village of Khonamuh which supplied stones for the artistic manufacture of jewellery, stone-ware, etc., for which Kashmir was famous.

#### HANDICRAFTS MANUFACTURE

From ancient times Kashmiris are celebrated for their artistic manufactures. Wood-work, metal-work and papier mache received an impetus under the benevolent rule of Zain-ul-abidin. This is attested to by Mirza Haider Dughlat who in his *Tarikh-i-Rashidi* affirms:

“In Kashmir one meets with all those arts and crafts which are in most cities uncommon, such as stone-polishing, stone-cutting, bottle-making, window cutting, gold-beating, etc. In the whole of Maver-ul-Nahr (the country beyond the river Oxus, i. e. Khorasan) except in Samarqand and Bukhara, these are nowhere to be met with, while in Kashmir they are even abundant. This is all due to Sultan Zain-ul-abidin.”

But Kashmir's main industry, the shawl manufacture, dates its revival to an earlier time. It is said that Mir Sayyid Ali of Hamadan, known as Shah Hamadan, who visited Kashmir for the second time in 1378 A.D. and stayed on for over two years, encouraged some shawl weavers to produce this fine textile. Sultan Qutb-ud-din who was then the ruler of Kashmir patronized, nourished and stimulated the industry. More than one and a half century later, a resident of Khokand in Central Asia, named Nagz Beg came to Kashmir with his master Mirza Haider Dughlat, and got prepared a piece of *pushmina*,  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards wide and presented it to the Mirza. “What is this ?” asked his master. “A shawl,” was the reply. He called it by this name because the people of Khokand call a blanket a shawl in their language. It is said that since that time it came to be known as shawl. Nagz Beg later got more shawls woven with different patterns in red and green.

The *Amlikar* or embroidered shawl also owes its origin to the fertile imagination of a Kashmiri artisan named Ala Baba who lived in the time of the Afghan ruler, Azad Khan. It is said that Ala Baba was led to this pattern of shawl manufacture by a fowl walking on a white sheet of cloth which left the imprints of its dirty feet on it. He embroidered the spots with coloured thread and the cloth looking prettier with this design, came to be manufactured in large quantities.

During the Mughal period shawl industry received a great stimulus. Akbar was very fond of shawls, and took pains to improving this industry. This he did in the following four ways :



"His Majesty has ordered four kinds to be made ; *First*, Toos Asel, which is the wool of an animal of this name whose natural colour in general is grey inclining to red, though some are perfectly white ; and these shawls are incomparable for lightness, warmth and softness. Formerly they were always made with the wool in its original state, but his Majesty has some of them dyed and it is surprising they will not take the red colour. *Second*, Safed Alcheh which they also call Tarehdar. The natural colours of this wool are white or black ; and they weave three sorts of them, white, black and grey. Formerly there were not above three or four colours of shawls, but his Majesty has made them of various hues. *Third*, Zerdozy, Gulabetun, Keshdch, Culgha, Bandenun, Cheet, Alcheh and Perzdar which are of his Majesty's invention. *Fourth*, from being short pieces he had them made long enough for Jamas.

"Formerly shawls were but rarely brought from Kashmir and those who had them used to wear them over their shoulders in four folds, so that they lasted for a long time. Now they are worn single by people of all degrees. His Majesty has introduced the custom of wearing two shawls, one under the other, which is considerable addition to their beauty. By the attention of his Majesty, the manufacture of shawls in Kashmir is in a very flourishing state."<sup>1</sup>

During Akbar's time, shawls' became very popular and were manufactured in numerous ranges of price to suit the purses of both the middle and upper classes. The price of an ordinary piece of shawl  $1\frac{1}{2}$  yards long was from two rupees to eight *mohurs*. Shawl Cheerah was from two rupees to twenty-five *mohurs*, shawl Foteh from a half to three *mohurs*, and shawl Jamah from a-half to four *mohurs*.

In the time of Aurangzeb also shawls were the fashion of the day. The Mughals and Indians, both men and women, wore them in winter round their heads, passing them over the left shoulder as a mantle. -The price of the best kind of shawl-piece about three yards in length and two in breadth, with ornamental embroidery about a foot in length at both ends, was from fifty to one hundred and fifty rupees of those times. "The fur of the beaver," wrote Bernier, "is not so soft and fine as these shawls."

The Mughals made great efforts to have shawls manufactured down in the plains. In fact during the time of Akbar there were about 10,000 workmen at Lahore. But this experiment failed on account of the hot climate. Shah Jehan and Jehangir also took great pains to establish shawl industry at Patna and Agra, but did not succeed.

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1 *Ain-i-Akbari*. translated by Gladwin, p. 79.

The Afghans too showed much liking for shawls. Shawls had by then captured the imagination of the fashionable world and were in great demand in Iran, Turkistan and Europe. "In Kashmir are seen," wrote George Forster in 1783, "merchants and commercial agents of most of the principal cities of Northern India, also of Tartary, Persia and Turkey who, at the same time, advance their fortunes and enjoy the pleasure of a fine climate and country over which are profusely spread the various beauties of nature." He puts the number of shawl looms at 16,000, though he says that under the Mughals it was 40,000.<sup>1</sup>

This decline in the number of shawl looms may be ascribed to the cruel taxation policy of the Afghan rulers, who tried to suck the very lifeblood of both the weaver and the trader through the institution of Dag Shawl. This ruinous system came into existence in this way. Saffron and grain which the State got as its share of produce, were sold at higher than the market rates to the inhabitants, of course under pressure. It naturally told very severely on the poor shawl weavers who then numbered 12,000. In the time of Haji Karim Dad Khan (1776-83 A. D.) this practice was abolished, and in lieu of it the shawl weavers were made to pay a small tax called *Qasur-i-Shali*. Subsequently the Haji, at the suggestion of his *Wazir*, Dila Ram Quli, abolished the *Qasur-i-Shali* and instead levied a tax of  $1\frac{1}{2}$  pic per rupee *ad valorem* on every shawl manufactured. In the time of Sher Muhammad Khan, Mukhtar-ud-daula, the duty was raised to 3 pics per rupee. In the time of his son, Atta Muhammad Khan, shawl had become fashionable in Europe where it was carried by Napoleon who received it as a gift from the Khedive. Consequently there was a great demand for the shawl and an increase in the number of looms which rose to 24,000 in 1813 when Azim Khan was the Afghan governor of Kashmir. Finding it a profitable source of income, he reintroduced the system of forcible sale of grain at enhanced prices to shawl weavers in addition to the payment of excise duty. The shawl produced on the loom was taken by the State and the price of grain together with the amount of duty leviable on it, was recovered from its sale proceeds. Nobody could sell a piece which did not bear the stamp of Dag Shawl in token of payment of duty thereon. The evasion of payment made one liable to condign punishment.

"The price at the loom," wrote Forster, "of an ordinary shawl is eight rupees, thence in proportional quality, it produces from fifteen to twenty; and I have seen a very fine piece sold at forty rupees the first cost. But the value of this commodity may be largely enhanced by the

1 *Travels*, p. 22.

introduction of flowered work ; and when you are informed that the sum of one hundred rupees is occasionally given for a shawl to the weaver, the half amount may be fairly ascribed to the ornaments."

The other woollen manufactures were *pattu* and *dirma*. Kashmiris made their dress out of these. *Pattu* and *dirma* were also exported, but not in such quantities as shawls. Woollen cloth coming from Tibet was much better than these and was, therefore, preferred in India. During the Mughal days a *than* (10 yards) of *pattu* could be had for one or two rupees of the then currency and a *than* of *dirma* for two to four.

A good quantity of silk was produced in Kashmir during the medieval period. Zain-ul-abidin improved the industry considerably. "Among the wonders of Kashmir", writes Mirza Haider Dughlat, "are the numbers of mulberry trees cultivated for their leaves for the production of silk."<sup>1</sup> The industry seems to have continued to flourish under the Mughals too. "The mulberry is little eaten", Abul Fazal writes, "its leaves being reserved for the silk-worm."<sup>2</sup> The eggs were brought from Gilgit and Ladakh and were reared in the Valley. But "the production of silk in Kashmir was worked up locally and does not appear to have been extensive."<sup>3</sup> However, the small quantity of fibre that was produced was sold in cities in the rest of India, no silk-weaving industry being present in the Valley.

The carpet weaving industry owes its origin to Zain-ul-abidin who brought carpet-weavers from Samarqand. The industry flourished for a long time after his reign, but in course of time it decayed and died.

It was, however, in the time of Ahmad Beg Khan, one of emperor Jehangir's governors of Kashmir that a Kashmiri Muslim, named Akhund Rahnema went to perform the Haj pilgrimage *via* Central Asia. On his way back he visited Andijan in Persia where carpets were manufactured. There he picked up the art and re-started the industry in Kashmir. The pile carpets made in Kashmir attained great perfection and were of floral design with mosques, gardens, wild animals, gliding fish, etc.<sup>4</sup>

During the period of the Sultans and the Mughals, Kashmir arts and crafts had reached a high level of workmanship. The Mughals, be it said to their credit, took a keen interest in Kashmir

1 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, 16 b.

2 Jarret's trans, of *Ain-i-Akbari*, p. 349.

3 Moreland, *India at the death of Akbar*.

4 Pandit Anand Koul, *Kashmir*, pp. 40-41.



products and encouraged industries in every possible way. "The workmanship and beauty", observes Bernier, "of their *palkeys*, bedsteads, trunks, inkstands, boxes, spoons, and various other things are quite remarkable. They perfectly understand the art of varnishing and are eminently skilful in closely imitating the beautiful veins of a certain wood, by inlaying with gold thread, so delicately wrought that I never saw anything more elegant or perfect."

An industry for which Kashmir became famous all over India was paper-making. Prior to the introduction of this industry by Zain-ul-abidin in the fifteenth century A.D., birch-bark was used for writing purposes in Kashmir. Numerous birch-bark manuscripts are still extant.

Zain-ul-abidin imported paper-makers from Samarqand. A factory was established at Naushahar, the new city of the Sultan. The pulp was made from rags at Ganderbal, nine miles from Srinagar on the Leh road and this pulp was turned into paper in vats at Naushahar. This industry, now nearly extinct, continues to remain in this locality, something unique and remarkable in the world of today—an industry still being practised and having remained unchanged in method, appliance and product for over five centuries.<sup>1</sup>

The Kashmir paper was of silky texture and glossy appearance and was in great demand in India for writing purposes. George Forster writing in 1783, says that "the Kashmirians fabricated the best writing paper of the East," and that it was formerly "an article of extensive traffic."<sup>2</sup> The Kashmiri paper possessed the quality that once the ink had been washed off, it could again be used for writing.<sup>3</sup>

The manufacture of paper reminds us of another industry which may rightly be said to be peculiar to Kashmir, namely papier mache. This was also introduced into the Valley by Sultan Zain-ul-adidin who imported artists from Samarqand.<sup>4</sup> Actually the industry has derived its name from 'mashed paper', the process involving the pasting on sheets of paper to moulds of the article to be produced. It is then painted and varnished and beautiful floral and other designs drawn with a fine painting brush. "The skill shown by the *naqash* (designer)", says Lawrence, "in sketching and designing is remarkable." The industry reached its apogee during the Mughal rule when the products of the papier mache artist like pen-cases, jewellery-boxes, book-ends, etc., were in great demand in Delhi and other provincial capitals.

1 Pandit Anand Koul, *Ibid.*, p. 52.

2 *Journey*, ii, p. 19.

3 *Muntakhab-u-Twarikh*, iii, 202.

4 Pandit Anand Koul, *Op. Cit.*, p. 45.

The wood carving industry, as noted by Bernier, was also in a flourishing state during the Mughal period and earlier. Specimens of the ancient carpenter's art are still extant in the *khatamband* ceilings, *pinjra* or lattice-work, and carving in the mosques of Shah Hamadan and Naqashband Sahib in Srinagar. Since building industry during the medieval times changed over from stone to timber, the carpenter was in great demand and seems to have commanded a market in the bordering hill states as well.

#### INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION

Very scanty information is available on the industrial organisation in medieval Kashmir. We only know about the shawl manufacture that it was at first in the form of a cottage industry, the shawl-weaver working on his loom in the house, his wife and children occasionally helping him in making the warp and woof, etc. Subsequently during the Mughal and Afghan period when the demand from the Mughal court, Persia and Europe increased, the industry developed under private entrepreneurs, called *karkhandars*, who set up looms and employed weavers. In the time of Akbar there were 2,000 looms for making shawls.<sup>1</sup> When, however, the department of Dag Shawl came into existence under Haji Karim Dad Khan, the products of the loom were taken by the State which after deducting the duty and other charges sold them to merchants engaged in this trade.

Regarding other industries it is highly probable that since Kashmiris dislike change, the present system of cottage manufacture must have been in existence then as well.

#### PEASANT AND LABOURER

The lot of the peasant in the Valley during the time of the later Hindu kings was pitiable. Apart from the heavy revenue demands from the landlord and the ruler, there was political insecurity and often the hard-earned grain was looted by the greedy soldiers of the warring factions in the countryside. The cruel levy of *Begar* or forced labour had attained scandalous proportions and the poor cultivator was frequently pulled out of his field in the midst of agricultural operations to carry the baggage and supplies of the armed followers of a feudal lord.

The conditions improved with the advent of Muslim rule. True the civil wars and disturbances continued, particularly during the reigns of the later Sultans but the people had also by then acquired

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1 Razi, *Haft Iqlim*, f. 1569.

political consciousness to some extent and resisted the imposition of *Begar*. The mere fact that Zain-ul-abidin undertook extensive irrigation projects is clear proof of the improved condition of the peasantry who, it appears, were in search of more land to work on. But the most encouraging factor was the settlement of land revenue and fixation of rent.

The hated system of *Begar*, however, was not altogether abolished by the Sultans. "In fact from the time of Shihab-ud-din, it was exacted even from the hanjis who were required to serve the king for seven days in every month."<sup>1</sup> Besides transport, compulsory labour was taken for collecting saffron which was a State monopoly. A certain quantity of salt was however paid in wages to these labourers. It was in the time of Ghazi Shah Chak that the peasant was given eleven *traks* of saffron flower, from which he had to give back  $\frac{1}{4}$  *trak* of pure saffron to the government. This was so devised as to leave him hardly any remuneration for his work. It was Akbar who on his third visit to Kashmir abolished this custom to the great relief of the peasants.<sup>2</sup> Itqad Khan, the last governor of Kashmir under Jehangir, revived this iniquitous *corvee*, but when Shah Jehan who succeeded him came to know of it, he forthwith ended it, and dismissed Itqad.

Under the Mughals the condition of the peasants and labourers seems to have improved further. The large amount of land revenue realized from each Pargana must alone convince us that the peasant worked hard and got fair return for his labour. Of course *Begar* was not uncommon even at that time, but the practice did not reach the same alarming proportions as during the rule of the Afghans. As Lawrence puts it, "the very durability of some of the buildings of the Mughals, suggested that the work was paid for; buildings constructed by forced and unpaid labour do not last long." We have the authority of the inscription on the Kathi Darwaza of Akbar's fort round Hari Parbat to prove that labour employed in constructing it was paid for. When Aurangzeb visited Kashmir in 1665, all the luggage of the royal camp was carried from Bhimber to Srinagar by Kashmiri porters. Some of them were sent by the governor of Kashmir, and some had come voluntarily in the expectation of earning a little money.

The wages fixed by the emperor were ten crowns (French) for every 100 lbs. weight.<sup>3</sup> Considering the mountainous paths and the passes that had to be traversed, a porter could not carry more than 50 lbs.

1 Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 251.

2 *Ain-i-Akbari* (Blochmann), p. 90.

3 Bernier, *Travels*, Edited by Constable and Smith.



The daily wages, assuming the journey to have been completed in ten days, would come to half a crown a day. The purchasing power of money being quite high and this being the wage paid by the government which must have been lower than the prevailing rate, it can safely be deduced that unskilled labour was fairly paid for.

## TRADE AND COMMERCE

Although separated from the rest of India by high mountains, Kashmir had yet close trade relations with commercial centres in India as far away as Bengal and Coromandal coast. There was also a brisk import and export trade with Tibet, Central Asia, China and Persia.

Kashmir was accessible by twenty-six different routes, the most important of which have already been described in detail. During the Mughal period, the two main routes leading to western Punjab and the plains of India passed through Bhimber and Pakhli. Of the first there were three branches, viz., Hastivanj, Pir Panjal, and Tangtallah. The Tangtallah route does not exist now.

Tieffenthaler speaks of the following route as generally followed by merchants. This was in use particularly during the Afghan rule, when due to disturbed conditions in the Punjab, the other routes had become unsafe. From Najibgarh, Alamnagar : Dharampur : Sharanpur : Tajpur : Guler : Nanh (at this place the road enters the mountains) : Bilaspur, Jala : Zoali : Haripur : Manota : Basohli : Bhadrawah : Kishtwar : Srinagar.<sup>1</sup>

There were two trade routes to Central Asia. The first passed through Gilgit and Kashgar and the other was from Skardu to Yarkand, which passed the Baltero glacier and which, owing to change in the ice, is now no longer passable. These two routes also led to China, with which country an appreciable quantity of trade was in existence then.

“But since the irruption of Shah Jehan into Little Tibet, the king of the latter place, not only interdicted the passage of the caravans, but forbade any person from Kashmir to enter his dominions.” Trade connections between Kashmir and Central Asia and Tibet were so intimate that they could not be cut off altogether. The merchants, instead, took a longer and circuitous route. From Kashmir they went to Panta in Bihar, thence to Nepal, *via* Kuti (Nilam) Pass to Shigatze, and thence to Lhasa. From Lhasa there was a trade-route to

<sup>1</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, *India of Aurangzeb*.

Sinning Fu on the Chinese frontier, north-east of Khosai and the Charing Nor.

#### IMPORTS AND EXPORTS

The main commodities imported in bulk were salt and shawl wool. Most of the salt came from the Punjab over the Pir Panjal route, but some also came from the salt lakes in Ladakh and from Chang Thong. Import of salt became difficult during the times of civil war or foreign invasion and we have several passages in the Chronicles describing the hardships that the people had to undergo due to shortage of this essential commodity.<sup>1</sup>

It was the raw material for their main industry, the shawl manufacture, that lured the Kashmiri traders to the inhospitable regions of Tibet. The shawl industry which saw its hey-day during the Mughal and Afghan rule, requires the warm, soft and flossy underwool called *keli phumb* or *pushm* of *kel* or shawl-goat inhabiting the elevated regions of Tibet. "The caravans from Tibet further loaded themselves with the produce of the country, such as musk, crystal, jade and especially with a quantity of very fine wool of two kinds, the first from the sheep of that country, and the latter which is known by the name of *touz*, and resembles as already observed, the beaver, and should rather be called hair than wool".<sup>2</sup>

In addition to shawl-wool, Tibet exported to Kashmir gold and musk, while woollen cloth was brought from Ladakh by Ladakhi traders.<sup>3</sup> From Khotan came its famous jade and also silks, carpets, pottery, brass, and copper vessels.<sup>4</sup> Agate, opal, turquoise and other kinds of precious stones were imported from Badakshan, Bukhara and Yarkand.<sup>5</sup>

But it was mainly from Indian markets that Kashmir imported most of its cotton piece-goods, sugar, spices, gold, silver and copper.

The most important article of export was Kashmir's shawl, which found a ready market in India, but which according to Abul Fazal was sent "to every clime."<sup>6</sup> Other commodities which were exported in rather limited quantities were woollen piece-goods and blankets, fresh and dried fruits, saffron, timber and horses. Besides, Kashmir and Ladakh served as entrepôts, most of the overland trade between India

1 Sriv., p. 327.

2 Bernier, *Letters*, p. 426.

3 Jonar ; p. 18.

4 Stein. *Khotan*. i, pp. 132-33.

5 Lawrence; *Valley*, p. 65.

6 *Ain-i-Akbari*, ii, p. 358.

and Central Asia and Tibet passing through the kingdom. In the bazars of Srinagar and Leh met Turkish, Tibetan, Indian and Nepalese traders who had built their rest-houses and godowns there. The following table gives an idea of the principal commodities imported into and exported from Kashmir during the Muslim rule :

<i>Place</i>	<i>Exports</i>	<i>Imports</i>
Rest of India	Fruits : fresh and dried, saffron, shawls and woollen stuff, silk-fibre, horses, wood-work, metal-work and stone-work.	Precious metals for coinage and ornaments, salt, cotton piece-goods, spices.
Central Asia and Tibet	Saffron, wood-work, metal work.	Shawl wool, woollen cloth, musk, crystal, jade, salt, tea, kahruba and Mumi-rani-Chini.

#### COMMERCIAL ORGANISATION

Kashmir traders seem to have been very enterprising during the medieval times. Most of the import and export trade of not only Kashmir but of Tibet as well, was in their hands. There were also Hindustani businessmen who had established their branches and agencies in the Valley. At the conquest of Kashmir by the Afghans, nearly eighty such firms closed their business due to insecurity of life and property.<sup>1</sup> In so far as the trade with Central Asia and Tibet was concerned, Kashmiri traders established their business houses in Yarkand, Kashgar and Tibet. Mr. Bogle who was sent to Tibet on a political mission by Warren Hastings in 1774 was told by the Teshu Lama that the

“Muhmmadan conquests in Hindustan tended to check the formerly unfettered intercourse between Tibet and the valley of the Ganges through the passes of the Southern Himalayas; but that this obstacle was by no means permanent and the commercial enterprise of the Newars and the Kashmiris brought the land of peace-loving Lamas into friendly intercourse with peoples whose countries extended from the frontiers of Siberia to the shores of the Bay of Bengal.”<sup>2</sup>

Mr. Bogle found in Tibet that the natives of Kashmir like the Jews in Europe or the Armenians in Turkish Empire, “scattered them-

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikh-i-Hassan*, MSS.

<sup>2</sup> Markham, *Mission of Bogle to Tibet*, p. lv.



selves over the eastern kingdoms of Asia and carried on an extensive traffic between the distant parts of it and had formed establishments in Lhasa and all the principal towns in the country."

A part of the shawl trade with India during the Mughal and Afghan times was carried on through the agency of the government. Most of the shawls, for instance, were taken by officials of the government and sent to Delhi and Agra where some of them used to be presented to the emperor and the rest sold to courtiers and the nobility. The Mughal emperors, during their many visits were followed by a horde of traders from Hindustan who purchased shawls and other artistic ware and sold them at profit in the chief cities of India.

#### INTERNAL TRADE

This trade comprised imported commodities and goods produced in Kashmir. According to Mirza Haider Dughlat, the markets and streets of Srinagar were all paved with hewn stones. In the markets only drapers and retail dealers were to be found. But other tradesmen like the grocers, druggists, beer-sellers and bakers did business in their own homes. So was the case with shawl and silk merchants.<sup>1</sup> During the Mughal period, however, this custom seems to have died out, and we learn from Bernier that trade in Srinagar was very brisk and the streets were lined with long rows of shops offering various commodities for sale.

Trade in grains was, however, controlled by the Government all through the medieval period. This resulted from the custom of realizing land revenue in grain rather than in cash. The State's share of the grain was stored in granaries and was sold to the people at controlled rates. This naturally had a stabilising effect on prices in times of scarcity when the government would come out with its surplus grain for sale. However, it appears that these controls did not materially hinder the growth of trade, for, the Kashmiri merchants in medieval times were quite prosperous.<sup>2</sup>

Other towns which were centres of trade in the Valley were Anantnag, Sopore, Shopyan, Avantipura and Baramula.

The chief means of transport in the Valley was the river. Porters also carried heavy loads over difficult country. Pack-piones were used for carrying paddy and other food-grains from distant villages to the town market. Hand and bullock carts and other wheeled carriages were unknown. Roads were narrow and two ponies could at best go abreast.

1 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 425.

2 *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*, ii, 147.

The rivers were spanned by bridges constructed of stone and timber, or by rope bridges formed of three cords made of twisted twigs. These rope bridges were naturally used for foot traffic only. The permanent bridges were a feature introduced under the rule of the Sultans. Previously there existed only boat bridges under the rule of the Hindu kings. Sharaf-ud-din Yazdi, however, in his *Zaffar-nama* notices the existence of boat bridges also across the Jhelum.<sup>1</sup>

#### CURRENCY AND WEIGHTS

The monetary system of Kashmir as prevailing during the Hindu period continued to be in vogue throughout the rule of the Sultans, the Mughals and the Pathans, varying no doubt in the type and weight of the individual coins issued by various kings from time to time. Similarly the use of paddy as a medium of exchange or subsidiary currency remained intact.

The coinage under the Sultans consisted almost entirely of copper, the coins being called *Puntsu* or *Kasera*. But the actual unit of the monetary system was the cowree, which was used for fractional payments or minor purchases.<sup>2</sup>

Some notable features of the coins issued by the Sultans of Kashmir are their shape and size. They are all square, and have the same kind of legend on the reverse, namely *Zarb-i-Kashmir*. The weight of the silver coins varies from 91 to 96 grains and of copper averages about 83 grains. Some of the coins are in brass. On some the dates are given in figures as well as in words, but they are crude in construction and confusing in chronology. Instead of Sultan as in the designation of the descendants of Shah Mir, the Chak surname is given as Badshah, perhaps in imitations of the Mughals. According to Rogers, Zain-ul-abidin is the only Sultan who calls himself *Naib-i-Amir-ul-Muminin*.

The process of deterioration in the copper currency of Kashmir which set in originally during the time of later Hindu kings, was carried further under that of the Sultans. We have in fact a distinct record in a passage of Srivara's Chronicle<sup>3</sup> (iii-214), wherein he relates that in the reign of Hassan Shah (1472—84 A.D.) "owing to the exhausted state of the treasury the old copper *Pnncavimsatika* (*Puntsu*) or 'twenty-five' was somewhat reduced in weight." He also mentions that when this Sultan found that the *dinaras* of Toramana had ceased to be current, he issued a new coin *dvitinari* made of lead which was impressed with the figure of a Naga.

1 *Zaffar-nama*, p. 179.

2 Sriv, p. 101 ; Stein, Trs. of *Rajatarangini*, II, 312.

3 Stein, Trs. of *Rajatarangini*, Vol. II, page 312.

It appears that under the Chaks, silver and gold coins were more in use than under the Shah Mirs. This can be accounted for by the close situation that Kashmir had to the Mughal empire.

The Kashmir currency which remained unchanged in its essentials throughout the Muslim period consisted of *dinara*, *bahagani*, *puntsu*, *hath*, *sasun*, *lakh* and *crore*. Their relative value as given in the *Ain-i-Akbari* may be tabulated as

12 <i>dinaras</i>	=	1 <i>Bahagani</i>
2 <i>Bahagani</i>	=	1 <i>Puntsu</i>
4 <i>Puntsu</i>	=	1 <i>Hath</i>
10 <i>Hath</i>	=	1 <i>Sasun</i>
100 <i>Sasun</i>	=	1 <i>Lakh</i>
100 <i>Lakh</i>	=	1 <i>Crore</i> or 10,000,000 <i>Dinaras</i> .

In addition to these there were other types of coins also like *ashrafis* and *tankas*, as is clear from a passage in the Chronicles regarding the erection of a *Khanqah* by Sultan Muhammad Shah's queen. But these coins were apparently imported from India and must have been in circulation side by side with indigenous coins.

#### COINS OF SULTANS AND CHAKS

The earliest coins of the Sultans still extant are those of Sultan Sikandar. As already mentioned they are very inartistic, "Kashmiris", as Rogers observes, "being the worst die-sinkers of the world".<sup>1</sup> Moreover they are not helpful in fixing the dates of the rulers, partly because the dates in a large number of coins is not legible, and partly because the same date is employed by successive rulers.

The copper coins which are very common are not also legible. They are round in shape with an average diameter of .8" and weight varying from 71 to 100 grams. The obverse has a bar (a line across the middle of the coin) with a central knot of arabesque design. The knot in some cases is elaborate; in others it consists of a carelessly formed circle. The name of the king is written below the bar, but above come the words *Sultanul-Azam*. Except in the case of Zain-ul-abidin, the word *Shah* is invariably added to the name. The reverse is occupied completely with *Zarb-i-Kashmir* and the year is added in Arabic.

Sultan Zain-ul-abidin made a notable departure in coinage, in that he also issued coins in brass. He had thus copper, brass and silver coins. But unlike his silver coins which have the date 842 A.H., his copper coins bear 841 and 851. What these signify is impossible to say.

1 J. A. S. B. lxx (1886), p. 223.



The coins of the Chaks follow the same pattern as that of Sultans but we find a larger number of silver coins in circulation. The coins of Hussain Shah Chak bear the date 970 A.H. which signifies the year of his accession. The coins bearing the name of Ali Shah Chak must have been minted by his son Yusuf Shah because the dates they bear range from 987 to 990 A.H. Like the copper coins, the silver coins of Hussain Shah, Ali Shah and Yusuf Shah bear the dates in Persian.

"On the obverse the silver coins have the inscription *Zarb-i-Kashmir*, enclosed within a lozenge-shaped border of wavy lines, and the date is inscribed in the segments outside the lozenge. The reverse contains the name of the king with his title. The Chak rulers call themselves Padshah and Ghazi, but in addition, each ruler adopts a separate title."<sup>1</sup>

The number of gold coins of Sultans and Chaks so far discovered is very small. Their weight is about 175 grains and follow the same pattern in design and die as the silver ones. There are however variations in legends and titles used by different rulers.

#### MUGHAL AND AFGHAN COINS

Among the extant coins of the Mughals minted at Srinagar (called Kashmir during the Muslim period) there are some bearing the name of Islam Shah Sur, which must have been issued by some of the rivals of Mirza Dughlat in anticipation of Islam's success in his invasion of Kashmir. We also find some coins bearing Humayun's name, minted no doubt under orders of Mirza Dughlat. Again, Rogers came across Akbar's coins struck in Kashmir as early as 1557 A.D. and another one of 1579 A.D. This shows the earlier attempts of the Mughals in bringing the Valley under their hegemony through the machinations of their stooges and partisans in Kashmir itself.

Akbar had a fine currency in gold and silver. Srinagar retained its seat as mint-town under the Mughals. The monetary value of the local smaller coins with that of the standard Mughal coins as given by Abul Fazal was : 1 *Hath* ("Hundreder") = 1 copper *Dam* of Akbar. The *Sasun* or "Thousander" was the equivalent of 10 *Haths*, and must hence be reckoned as 10 *Dams*, or one-fourth of a Rupee of Akbar. The *Lakh*, as its name shows, was equal to 100 *Sasun* and accordingly represented the value of 1000 *Dams*.

The Afghan rulers made no departure from the Mughal coinage. We have, however, the unique coinage of Atta Muhammad Khan, the Afghan Governor (grandson of Shah Wali Khan, Wazir of Ahmad Shah

1 Hassan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 293.

Abdali) who after declaring himself independent issued coins in the name of the patron-saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nur-ud-din Rishi. There is a handsome silver coin weighing 224 grains, the only piece of this weight in the entire Durrani Series. Five double *Mohars* of a beautiful design were struck later. In the central square on the flowered field on the obverse is the legend bearing the saint's name and on the reverse is a couplet in his praise. This was perhaps the only time when Kashmir had the coinage representing a republican rule—without mention of any king or chief in the legend.

The units of weight and measurement during the Muslim period did not undergo any change and conformed to those prevailing during the Hindu period. Akbar, however, fixed the unit of weight as *man* which was divided into 40 equal parts, called *seer*. The *man* of Akbar was not, however, equal to our maund, but to 56 lbs. only. Though the *seer* and its subdivisions were the standard Mughal weights, all the weighings in Kashmir were done in *Kharwars* and *Traks*, a *Kharwar* being equal to 3 *man* and 8 *seer* (Akbarshahi). Even the payments in cash were calculated in *Kharwars* of paddy; and so were the measurements, a *trak* of land being equal to one-fourth of an acre.

### FLOODS AND FAMINES

"Fate", philosophizes the Chronicler Srivara, "augments the happiness of men by increasing the crops, and Fate also brings calamity to them in the shape of a famine. The clouds that make the grass grow by rain, also destroy it by the weight of snow."

These words truly reflect the feelings of the common man in medieval Kashmir with regard to the occurrence of natural calamities like floods and famines which often struck the Valley, and which were considered to be beyond the capacity of man to fight against. Living in a secluded valley where in the event of a failure of crops due to drought, floods or untimely snowfall, it was difficult to obtain grain from neighbouring territories, one could not but give up hope and resign oneself to the mercy of Fate. No wonder floods and prolonged famines took an alarming toll of life and property and adversely affected the economy of Kashmir all along its chequered history.

The Valley is practically independent of rains. A fairly hard winter stores sufficient snow on the mountains to keep, with a gradual thaw through the summer, the irrigation canals constantly brimming: and this is all that is wanted to ensure an abundant harvest. But the contour of the land makes the cup-shaped Valley liable to floods and

consequent famines. Whenever abnormal summer rains melt the snow and bring it down in torrents to the Valley below, a flood ensues, destroying the crops. Or there may be an early fall of snow in October resulting in the golden harvest being swept off and throwing the country into the jaws of starvation and death.

Frequent occurrence of famines moved the rulers of the time to devise ways and means for meeting an emergency of this nature. It was perhaps in pursuance of this that part of the land revenue was realised in kind, the grain being stored in granaries and sold to or distributed among the people at controlled rates from time to time. As a precautionary measure against famines, a part of the grain stock, sufficient to feed the people for a year, was laid in and it was only when there was a failure of crops in successive years due to fire or earthquake or when the government stocks of grain were accidentally destroyed that there was widespread distress and heavy loss of life.

Some enlightened rulers took positive steps to prevent the occurrence of famines by implementing flood protection projects. We have already seen how effective these were in the time of Avantivarman. But the succeeding period of anarchical conditions destroyed the good work done by this ruler, and hence the helpless plight of the people, and their resignation to the mercy of Fate during the visitation of a natural calamity. However, under the exceptionally long and peaceful rule of Zain-ul-abidin, flood protection measures were again implemented and to increase the agricultural production more land was brought under cultivation by providing irrigation facilities.

By the time the Mughals brought the Valley under their rule, Kashmir had passed through several devastating famines, but the emperors who for strategic and other reasons built the Pir Panjal road, and linked the Valley with the rest of India, did not find it difficult to reduce their intensity by importing grains. Shah Jehan, for instance, despatched large quantities of grain from the Punjab for the famine-stricken people of Kashmir.

It was in 1344, the second year of Sultan Alua-ud-din's reign that untimely rains and snow destroyed the crops, which caused a severe famine, in which a large number of people perished. Sixteen years later, in 1360, when Sultan Shihab-ud-din was on the throne, the Valley witnessed a devastating flood "troubling his subjects grievously ... There was not a tree, not a boundary mark, not a bridge, not a house that stood in the way of the inundation, which it did not destroy".<sup>1</sup> In order to prevent such a calamity befalling his capital again, the king

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1 Jonaraja, *Kings of Kashmir*, p. 41.



built a beautiful town, Lakshmipura, near the high ground at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill naming it after his queen, Lakshmi.

Towards the end of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin's rule, in 1460 A.D., a severe famine occurred in Kashmir due to an untimely fall of snow. "The country was beautified with the *shali* (paddy)," records Srivara, "when snow fell in the month of October and caused distress..... The ripe *shali* crop which had gladdened the hearts of men was covered with snow, even, as men of learning and merit are covered with sandal paste in an assembly of the wicked and ignorant."<sup>1</sup> The monster Famine soon entered the land and "there were emaciated men distressed for want of food, oppressed with hunger, and with inflamed eyes" to be seen roaming about the land in search of a morsel of food. People lived on edible leaves, roots and fruits, "as if they had taken some religious vow." A *Kharwar* of paddy which was ordinarily sold for 200 could not be obtained even for 1,500 *dinaras*.

The king immediately undertook relief measures. Camps were set up all over the Valley where the people were served with free meals prepared of the rice from the king's reserve stocks. "After he had fed his distressed subjects for a few months like his children," gratefully acknowledges the Chronicler, "a plentiful crop grew" and normal conditions returned to the land. The anti-social elements like usurers and black marketers were severely punished and compelled to return the precious articles to the owners who, oppressed by hunger, had exchanged them for grain at abnormal rates during the famine. The debts incurred by the people in distress at high rates of interest were cancelled by the king. "Out of humanity the king cancelled the deeds on *burja* (birchbark) leaves drawn up between the creditors and debtors."

Two years later, in 1462, the Valley witnessed a severe flood when "the buildings in the city drowned themselves in water as if to avoid the sight of the distress of those who had raised them."<sup>2</sup> Fortunately the standing crops were not quite ripe and the stems being still strongly rooted, were not affected by this inundation. But apprehending the recurrence of a similar disaster, the king built his new city of Srinagar at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill now known as Naushahar locality. He also repaired the protective embankments which had been originally raised by Suyya in the 9th century A.D. and similarly deepened the bed of the river Jhelum at Baramula for a speedy discharge of flood waters from the Valley.

Man, no less than Nature, was also responsible for a number of

1 *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 117.

2 *Ibid*, p. 119.

famines. In 1532, Mirza Haider Dughlat's army of five thousand horse entered Kashmir, carrying fire and sword to its villages and towns. The people, however, rose in a body and launched a guerilla war against the invader. The whole winter passed in warfare and peace was concluded in the month of July. The land could not be cultivated and famine was the result which lasted two years, taking a heavy toll of life.

In 1576, during the reign of Ali Shah Chak a devastating famine took the Valley in its deadly grip. Snow fell in the month of September and destroyed the rice crop, resulting in a famine which lasted three years. Its ravages wiped off more than half the population of the Valley by death and emigration, and many cases of cannibalism are recorded in the annals of the times.

It was during the reign of Akbar that famine relief was organised on governmental level following the occurrence of the great famine of 1598-99, which resulted from untimely rains destroying the crops. The severity of the famine was aggravated by the influx of the emperor's large retinue. Thousands of maunds of foodgrains were imported on the orders of Akbar, from Pakhli, Bhimber and Western Punjab. Nearly a lakh of people were fed daily at the Idgah. Extensive public works like building of a fort, roads and canals were undertaken to provide employment to the starving population.<sup>1</sup>

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1 The Portuguese priest Pieru du Jarric, who has given us an interesting account of Akbar, relates the experiences of two priests, Father Hierosme Xavier and Benoist de Gois who accompanied Akbar to Kashmir.

"Whilst they were in the kingdom of Caximir there was so grievous a famine that mothers were rendered destitute, and having no means of nourishing their children, exposed them for sale in the public places of the city. Moved to compassion by this pitiable sight, the Father bought many of these little ones, who, soon after receiving baptism, yielded up their spirits to their Creator. A certain Saracen, seeing the charity of the Father towards these children, brought him one of his own; but the Father gave it back to the mother, together with a certain sum of money for its support; for he was unwilling to baptise it, seeing that, if it survived, there was little prospect of its being able to live a Christian life in that country. At day-break the next morning, however, the mother knocked at the door of his lodging, and begged him to come to the house and baptise the child, as it was about to die. Accompanied by some Portuguese, he went with her to the house and baptised the child, having first obtained the consent of its father. The latter, after it was dead, wished to circumcise it, but this the Father would not permit, but buried it with Christian rites. There was another mother, a Mahomedan woman, who brought to him, under similar circumstances, her infant son to be baptised; and in this case, too, as soon as the rite had been performed, the spirit of the little sufferer ascended to heaven."

During Jehangir's reign, in 1615, an epidemic of plague occurred in the Valley. The emperor speaks of its ravages very touchingly in his *Memoirs*: "On this day a report of the chronicler of events arrived, stating that plague had taken firm hold of the country (Kashmir) and that many had died. The symptoms were that on the first day there was headache and fever and much bleeding from the nose. On the second day the patient died. In the house where one person died all the inmates were carried off. Whoever went near the sick person or a dead body, was affected in the same way. In one instance the dead body was thrown on the grass and it chanced that a cow ate some of the grass. It died. Things had come to such a pass that from fear of death fathers would not approach their children and children would not go near their fathers. A strange thing was that in the ward in which the disease began, a fire broke out and nearly 3,000 houses were burnt. I trust that the Almighty will have mercy on His sinful slaves, and that they will be altogether freed from this calamity."

Nothing could, however, be done by human effort to fight this epidemic as no remedy was available. It, however, subsided by itself after a few weeks, but not before a few thousand people fell as its victims.

The severity of the famines was considerably reduced by the opening of the Valley to the outside world by the Mughals who built two roads over the Pir Panjal and Jhelum valley passes. Construction of a number of *serais* or travellers' rest houses at various stages on the roads and the appointment of permanent staff to look after their maintenance, reduced the hazards of the journey. Consequently grain and other commodities could be imported with ease in an emergency.

This was evident in 1638 when during a visit of the emperor to the Valley, unprecedented floods devastated a large part of Srinagar and caused enormous damage to the standing crops in the countryside. A severe famine followed in which thousands of people died. The death-toll would have been heavier had not Shah Jehan personally organised relief by sending grain from the Punjab and having it distributed among the starving population.

Eight years later a similar calamity befell the people again, and again Shah Jehan despatched huge quantities of grain from Sialkot, Lahore and Gujrat. Yet another famine due to drought caught the unfortunate Valley in its deadly grip during Shah Jehan's fourth and last visit to the Valley in 1651. He, in order to supervise the despatch of grains from the Punjab, cut short his visit after having spent only two months in the Valley. He entrusted the fair distribution of the grains to an efficient officer, Nawab Said Ullah Khan.



Several visitations in the nature of famines, fires and epidemics overtook the unfortunate Valley during the rule of the later Mughal emperors, but the severe famine of 1746-47 beat all records in its heavy toll in human misery and death. For some time earlier to the black year, the chaotic conditions prevailing in the Valley due to insecurity, and the incursions of Khakha and Bomba raiders, had interfered with the proper tillage and irrigation of rice fields and this, coupled with the complete failure of government machinery and excessive rains in the spring, prevented the distressed cultivators from attending to the sowings. Later in the summer there again occurred a flood which swept off what little crops had been grown. The loss was all the more unfortunate because the reserve food stocks had already been exhausted during the preceding years of scarcity and political unrest. The weakening of the authority of the Central Government precluded the import of grains from the Punjab and neighbouring territory. No wonder that the severe famine wiped off more than three-fourths of the population of the Valley through death, emigration and disease. Dead bodies, unburied and uncremated, lay strewn on the ground, to be eaten by vultures.

Recurrence of famines continued during the Afghan rule in Kashmir. As a result of untimely rains and exactions levied earlier by the first Afghan governor, Abdullah Khan Ishk Aqasi, there was a severe famine 1755. Fortunately an able administrator, Abul Hassan Bandey, the minister of Raja Sukh Jewan, the Afghan governor of Kashmir, rose to the occasion. He distributed in an equitable manner the corn stored in the State granaries and thus saved the population from death by starvation. He wisely husbanded a portion of the grains for next year's seed. But unfortunately the next crop was also a failure and the scarcity conditions continued for two years more. It is said that at this time there appeared a blessing in disguise. Locust swarms invaded the Valley but since there were no standing crops for them to destroy, these very agents of destruction when boiled in water served as food for the famine-stricken people.

Towards the end of the Afghan rule, a severe famine hit the Valley and the then revenue farmer, Pandit Birbal Dhar, unable to realise the government dues from the famine-stricken cultivators ran in arrears for which he was harassed and reprimanded by the governor, Sirdar Azim Khan. To escape the wrath of the fierce governor he fled the land and taking refuge under Mahraja Ranjit Singh induced the latter to mount an invasion of Kashmir and annex it to his dominions.

### POSITION OF WOMEN

The advent of Muslim rule towards the middle of the fourteenth

century, did not produce an immediate change in the position of woman in society, since for a considerable time there was nothing to distinguish a Hindu from a Muslim in dress, manners and customs. But after Kota Rani's death, we find no mention of any queen who wielded authority or owned property in her own right. We miss the presence of the queen at the time of a Sultan's coronation. True there are accounts of queens who made religious endowments, established schools and other charitable institutions, but these are only few and far between.

Slowly the *purdah* or seclusion of women became a common practice among the upper classes, and the woman's right place was considered to be her home, and her most sacred duty obedience to her father and brother and husband. This naturally led to the institution of the harem in the case of the more prosperous and respectable classes of society.<sup>1</sup> It must not, however, be supposed that polygamy or the keeping of concubines was a common practice. This sort of luxury could be afforded only by a privileged few. In most cases the harem was no more than a separate living quarter for the women-folk of the family. *Purdah* was, however, unknown among the women of lower classes, especially in rural society, who moved about freely without a veil, doing out-door work, helping their husbands in the fields, in the gardens or on the river.<sup>2</sup> Bernier records that these women moved about freely, but those of the nobility remained behind *purdah*. To have a look at the inmates of the *zenana*, he would follow richly dressed elephants through the streets. As these elephants passed along, the sound of the silver bells with which they were adorned would attract the attention of the ladies inside the house, who would crowd to the windows to see the spectacle.

Wherefrom the *purdah* entered into Kashmir is difficult to say. It is generally believed that seclusion of women was practised at least among Hindu kings and nobles in the Middle Ages. Basham, for instance, records that "kings, at any rate, kept their women-folk in seclusion. The detailed instructions of the *Arthashastra* make it quite clear that the *antahpura*, or royal harem, was closely guarded, and its inmates were not allowed to leave it freely."<sup>3</sup> The Sultans, besides marrying within the families of Chaks, Magreys and Baihaqi Sayyids, also entered into matrimonial relations with the families of the Rajas of Jammu, Kishtwar and Rajauri, who being Rajputs had already adopted the institution of *purdah* among their women-folk.

By and by with the growing influence of the Sayyids from Persia and Central Asia, the *purdah* became common not only among the upper

1 M.W. Mirza, *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 608-09

2 Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 227.

3 A.L. Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, p. 179.

classes of Muslims but of Hindus as well. During the Mughal and Afghan periods the system became more rigid, but be it said to the credit of the women of the common folk, it did not make any progress among them and they continued to lead a free and healthy life through times of peace or turmoil.

Education does not seem to have been widespread among women of medieval Kashmir. There are no doubt instances of women of the well-to-do families receiving education as, for instance, the careers of Sura, Hayat Khatun, Gul Khatun, etc, would illustrate, but the women of the general mass of people could neither have the time nor money to receive proper education in private schools or institutions endowed by kings and queens. The life of Habba Khatun, however, shows that opportunities were not wanting even for peasant girls to acquire knowledge. In music and dance, inspite of the religious taboo, women artistes appear to have become "proficient and possessed a genuine ardour for song."<sup>1</sup>

Marriage of their children was arranged by the parents. We have instances of inter-marriages among Hindus and Muslims, a custom which seems to have been common during the rule of the Sultans. When the Muslims took Hindu wives, they allowed them to retain not only their Hindu names but also their faith. This practice was also common in Rajauri, Ladakh and Baltistan.<sup>2</sup> It was Jehangir who put a stop to this practice. Bernier records that Kashmiri women being very handsome and fair, "it was from this country that nearly every individual when first admitted to the court of the Great Mogol, selects wives or concubines, that his children may be whiter than the Indians and pass for genuine Mogols."

The custom of marrying boys and girls at an early age among both Muslims and Hindus came into vogue during the rule of the Afghans. "An Afghan would not molest a married woman, however pretty. So the only remedy to save the person and honour of a woman was to marry her young."<sup>3</sup> This evil practice continued beyond the Afghan rule until its prohibition by law during recent years. Under the Afghans who subjected the people in general to great hardships, women became the special targets of their licentious behaviour. Kashmiri women, irrespective of caste or creed, were "physically and spiritually shattered; their presence in every sphere of social activity was totally eclipsed."<sup>4</sup>

Prostitution seems to have been prevalent throughout the medieval

1 *Kings of Krshmira*, p. 133.

2 *Tuzk-i-Jehangeri*, ii—181.

3 Pandit Anand Koul, *The Kashmiri Pandit*, p. 33

4 Prem Nath Bazaz, *Daughters of the Vitasta*, p. 16



period. But except for Sultan Haider Shah and Sultan Hassan Shah who were fond of the society of women and had large harems, the other Sultans led a moral life. Their example was followed by their courtiers. A Muslim is enjoined by religion not to have more than four wives at one time and for that too strict conditions have been laid down, and no Sultan seems to have exceeded the prescribed limit. This is in contrast to the orgies of debauchery prevalent at the court of later Hindu rulers.

The practice of Sati which was common under the Hindus was stopped by Sultan Sikandar who considered it un-Islamic, and though these restrictions were later removed, the practice seems to have lost its importance. Jehangir was struck with horror when he found Muslim widows of Rajauri and other Jammu states, being buried alive with their dead husbands, and he forthwith stopped it.

But though woman had considerably lost her position and privileges during the Muslim rule, yet Islam conferred on her the rights denied to her by the Hindus. For example, she gained the right of divorce and of inheriting a portion of her father's property. A Muslim widow also got the right to marry again. Sultan Alau-ud-din, however, promulgated a law that no unchaste childless widow should have any share of her husband's property from her father-in-law. Hindu women, however, continued to be governed by their personal laws, but with the rapid conversion of the majority of people to Islam, most women benefited by the right of divorce and widow remarriage conferred on woman by the Muslim law.

### STANDARD OF LIFE

The spread of Islam to Kashmir, apart from bringing about a marked change in the social structure and religious composition of the people, had also far-reaching economic consequences. The insecurity of life and property which followed the civil wars and instable administration under the later Hindu rulers, had paralyzed trade and commerce and discouraged the farmer from applying his energies to agricultural pursuits. Consequently the standard of life of the common man had fallen so low as to have touched the starvation level.

With the accession of the Shahmir Sultans hope returned to the agriculturist and the trader. The early Sultans, like Shihab-ud-din and Qutb-ud-din, endeavoured to give a stable administration and patronized arts and industries. Zain-ul-abidin's rule was the golden age of Kashmir and the kingdom acquired fame as one of the prosperous regions of India.

Unfortunately this prosperity could not be maintained under the weak rule of the later Sultans and Chaks when the kingdom fell a prey

to internecine warfare and base intrigues among the leaders and ministers for the loaves and fishes of office. The kingdom thus presented itself as an easy and inviting prey to the Mughals who after its conquest, however, restored its shattered economy for nearly a century. Under the later Mughal emperors and Afghans, the clock was again put back and Kashmiris were the victims of tyranny and oppression. The standard of life fell and the "villages were half deserted, and the few inhabitants that remained wore the semblance of extreme wretchedness."

#### FOOD AND DRINK

Rice was, as always, the staple food of the people and hence a failure of the paddy crop invariably resulted in a famine. Rice was cooked in many ways, but the common practice was to boil it and to keep a portion overnight for the next morning's meals. With the influx of Persian Sayyids and Central Asian nobles into the Valley, various kinds of stuffed rice like *Pilav*, were introduced. Wheat does not seem to have been popular, and barley was regarded as a simple food, fit only for the poor or for those who renounced the world.<sup>1</sup> As during the Hindu period, meat, vegetables and fish continued to be important articles of diet of the people during the medieval period. Similarly the flesh of the fowl, ram, goat and various other birds was commonly eaten. There is mention by Srivara of the sale of beef, and also of "some merchants of the city, who were favourites of Mausulas but who had followed the customs of the Hindus from their birth, killing cows within the city. But when these wicked men had eaten the flesh of the kine, the part of the city where the animals had been slaughtered caught fire as if to purify itself."<sup>2</sup> A favourite dish of the Kashmiris was to cook fowl and brinjals together. Spices of various kinds were used in cooking meat and vegetables. "At Ashrama," records Srivara, "the king (Zain-ul-abidin) held the feast of rice, until flavour of the curries overcame the scent of the saffron."<sup>3</sup>

Fruit also formed a regular article of diet. Fruit which does not, due to difficulty of transport, seem to have been exported till the time of the Mughals, was hence available in abundance. Firishta records that the owner of a garden and the man who had no garden were all alike, for the garden had no walls, and no one was prevented from plucking the fruits. "Savoury cakes" were served in feasts, as also milk and curds.<sup>4</sup>

1 Sriv., p. 276.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 235.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 140.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 143.

The staple food during the Mughal period was rice, fish and various vegetables. "Though *Shali* rice is plentiful," remarks Adul Fazal, "the finest quality is not available." Wheat and *mung* were also cultivated as were water-melons and various vegetables on the floating gardons of the Dal. Mulberry was cultivated for feeding the silk cocoons and so its fruit was not eaten.

The Mughals were epicurean by temperament and were given to the pleasures of the table. They introduced their choicest cuisine and the Kashmiri cook learnt the preparation of *Goshtaba*, *Kabab* and *Roganjosh*. Later the Afghans added their bread and *Pilav* to his rich repertoire.

Drinking of wine appears to have been as popular under the Sultans as under the rule of Hindu kings. "The Muslims who participated in these festivals (of Hindus), also partook of wine. Most of the Sultans and their nobles too drank wine. Zain-ul-abidin took it in moderation, but Haidar Shah was a confirmed drunkard, and as a result neglected his State duties. Hassan Shah was in the habit of arranging drinking parties in his palace, or in the boats on the Jhelum and used to get drunk on these occasions."<sup>1</sup> Butter and milk were freely taken, but the chewing of betel leaves, so common with the Hindu rulers, appears to have gone out of fashion during the Muslim period.

#### DRESS AND ORNAMENTS

The dress of the Kashmiris has undergone several changes during the course of their long history. Kalhana mentions that before the time of Harsa (1089-1101), the people of the land in general wore their hair loose, did not have a head-dress and did not wear a short coat, but a long tunic. Perhaps due to the influence of the Muhammadanised areas in Gandhara and western parts of the Punjab, Harsa introduced the use of the turban and short coat. This seems to have been the dress of the people at the time of the foundation of the Sultanate. With the coming in of the Sufi saints and Muslim theologians from Persia and Central Asia, Kashmiris adopted the long robe, and round turban. The former is thus the forerunner of the *Pheran*, the present dress of the Kashmiris. The robe was mostly made of cotton and wool, but on festive occasions people wore silken garments too.<sup>2</sup>

The dress of the women resembled that of men, except that they had a fillet tied round their head, called *Kasaba* in the case of Muslim, and *Taranga* in the case of Hindu women. The Mughals are said to

1 Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 231.

2 *The Kings of Kashmir*, p. 207.



have encouraged the use of *Pheran* and of the *Kangri*, the portable fire-pot enclosed in a wicker case, to effeminate the hardy Kashmiris and to break their martial spirit. "The women wear a coarse, grey woollen garment, open from the neck to the waist. On the forehead they have a sort of red band, and above it an ugly, black, dirty clout, which falls from the head over the shoulders to the legs. Cotton cloth is very dear and their inborn poverty prevents them from possessing a change of raiment."<sup>1</sup> Owing to the cold climate of the Valley the Kashmiris took their bath at long intervals, and it was to provide them with hot water ablutions that Mirza Haider Dughlat introduced the construction of *hamam* or Turkish bath as an adjunct to the mosque. Jehangir in his *Tuzk* records that on account of poverty, a Kashmiri could not afford more than one *Pheran* which was replaced by a fresh one only when it was worn out. The common man wore the typical Kashmiri cap.

We have already noted the influence of Central Asia on the dress and ornaments worn by the Kashmiris during the Hindu period. The jewellery designs of the Valley were further enriched during the rule of the Sultans and the Mughals. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin's regal robes and ornaments "became famous for the various coloured threads that it contained."<sup>2</sup> The women wore ear-rings, nose drops and bangles.<sup>3</sup>

Fashions in ornaments changed with the advent of Mughal rule. Nur Jehan is said to have introduced more delicate varieties of jewellery in the Valley.<sup>4</sup> The love of the beautiful made the Kashmiris copy the ornaments of the Mughal nobility who had themselves borrowed these styles from Iran, Central Asia and the surrounding countries beyond Kabul. It appears that the beautiful jhumka, bell-shaped ear-rings, bracelets delicately traced with chenar leaf designs, necklaces composed of plaques strung on thread and set with uncut stones, and other varieties of ornaments, are all the result of a synthesis of the art of jewellers from all these countries. "The Kashmir goldsmiths are very ingenious and, though their work has not that lightness so charming in that of Delhi, it has a peculiar style of its own."<sup>5</sup>

#### HOUSES

The plan and construction of houses throughout the Muslim period was the same as at present. They were built of timber, intersticed with stone and brick "and their style is by no means contemptible."

1 Paelsart, *Op. Cit.*

2 Sriv., p. 151.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

4 Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol II, p. 581.

5 Ince, *The Kashmir Handbook*.

Near the forests the walls were formed of uncut logs. Timber was preferred chiefly on account of its cheapness, as also for its ability to withstand severe earthquakes. When, for instance, the town of Zainagir was destroyed by fire, Zain-ul-abidin "built it without delay, new and beautiful, with houses made of wood."<sup>1</sup> Mirza Haider Dughlat records that "in the town there are many lofty buildings constructed of fresh-cut pine. Most of these are, at least, five storeys high; each storey contains apartments, halls, galleries and towers. The beauty of their exterior defies description, and all who behold them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration."<sup>2</sup> Adjoining almost all the houses were small compounds and vegetable gardens. The houses were mostly of two to four storeys high and sometimes even more. The roofs which were sloping to throw off snow were constructed of planks laid over with sheets of birch-bark to make them water-tight. A layer of loose earth was spread over the birch-bark to keep it in place. White and violet lilies and red tulips grew on these roofs, presenting a lovely sight in spring. The poorer people had their huts thatched with reeds or rice straw. For ventilation the better-class houses had pretty latticed windows. The ground floor of the poorer people was used to keep the cattle, the family living on the first and second floors. The loft served as a store for household chattel. Bernier mentions that in the city the better class houses were situated on the river banks with beautiful gardens attached to them.

The free use of timber in the construction of houses was responsible for the frequent conflagrations in the cities and towns which reduced them to ashes. The Chronicles mention the devastating fires which caused an immense loss to the people and exposed them to the rigours of cold. Jehangir was a witness to one of these calamities when a whole quarter of Srinagar was destroyed by fire. Its intensity was such that even though he tried to save the Jama Masjid the flames overwhelmed it and burnt it to the ground. At the orders of the emperor the mosque was rebuilt under the supervision of the historian-architect, Malik Haider Chaudura.

#### FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

A marked feature of the social life of Kashmir from ancient times has been the observance of festivals, both religious and secular, and the holding of fairs at various places in the Valley. This can be traced to the injunctions contained in the ancient *Nilamatpurana* which prescribes certain rites and rituals for propitiating the Pisachas, who otherwise

1 *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 156.

2 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*. Trans, by Elias and Ross, p. 425.

would make it impossible for the Aryan settlers from the plains of the Punjab to stay on in the Valley during winter as well.

Among such festivals was that of Nagayatra. It was observed for thirteen days of the bright fortnight of Bhadun (August), and seems to have been celebrated both by the Hindus and Muslims of the Valley till as late as the reign of Jehangir. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin used to participate in the festivities "every year". On the fourth of the new moon in Bhadun, "the king fed the devotees for five days at Jayapidapura (modern Andarkot)." He made tanks here which were "filled with wine, cream and curries, and fed everybody." Thousands of enthusiastic merry-makers thronged the place and "out of his reverence for the devotees the king put up with the indecorous behaviour arising from intoxication which even ordinary men would not have borne." The fair continued till the twelfth day (Indradwadshi) of the bright fortnight when "the king dismissed the devotees after having laden them with quilts, attendants, money and walking staves."

On the thirteenth day of the moon was held the most popular festival, the Vethtruvah, which commemorated the day on which the source of the Jhelum was supposed to have been created by Siva. Veth is the Kashmiri name for the river Jhelum and Truvah the thirteenth of the month when the festival occurred. According to the ancient custom, the Jhelum in its course through the city and chief towns was illuminated with lamps on both its banks. Boats and barges with lighted tiny lamps glistening on their prows floated down the river. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin and his successors, down to Akbar and Jehangir, invariably participated in this festival which was celebrated by all the people irrespective of religion or caste they belonged to. Srivara, the historian, gives a graphic account of the festival in the following words :

"On the thirteenth day of the moon the king wished to see the display of lamps made on the occasion of the worship held on account of the birth of the Vitasta ; and he embarked on a boat and went to the capital. While on the water he listened to well-composed songs, and at the time of embarking and disembarking he accepted the blessings of citizens. The display of lamps offered by citizens to the river looked graceful as if the spirits of numberless holy places had come to the Vitasta for adoration. The rows of lamps placed at the ferry on both banks looked beautiful, as if the Gods had scattered golden flowers for the worship of the Vitasta. The moon was reflected on the river, but trembled on the water as if overcome by superior beauty, and humbled by the lovely faces of the citizens' wives who came to make offerings to



the Vitasta and to worship.”<sup>1</sup>

These two festivals were held when the peasant, freed from the toil of tending the rice crop, hopefully waited for the harvest. The festivals of the spring-time were more lovely and colourful. The most popular was the festival of Caitra (April) when fairs would be held in open fields and orchards. Surrounded by a riot of multi-coloured flowers, the revellers would listen to the music of singers and dancers. Here is what Srivara has to say about this festival in which the Sultan participated :

“At the Caitra festival, the king embarked on a boat, accompanied by his son, and with a view to enjoying the sport of flowers he went to Madavyarajya (Maraz). The line of the king’s boats on the Vitasta looked like the row of Indra’s chariots on the milky way. He started from Avantipura and stopped at royal palaces at Vijayesha and other places in order to witness dancing. ...Young women, proficient in music, possessed of sweet voice, and with a genuine ardour for song, graced the place. The renowned Tara and the actors sang various songs to the *naracha* tune, and to every kind of music.”

The Sultan who was fond of fireworks, for the manufacture of which he had imported men skilled in this art, encouraged their display by the people. On the Caitra festival particularly “fireworks of various colours made by the mixture of charcoal powder, sulphur, and saltpetre pleased the men.” Srivara paints a realistic picture of a fireworks display witnessed by the king at this festival when “from the tubes rose balls of fire to the sky, beautiful as silver, and looked like the planets Jupiter and Venus...These flaming tubes of saltpetre were held by actresses in their hands, and they shone like golden stars of beautiful colour falling from heaven.”

This spring festival continued to be popular throughout the Muslim period. In Srinagar the people flocked to the Hari Parbat hill to witness feats of archery and other athletic games. “The people besmeared themselves with saffron, aloes, camphor, and sandalwood paste on that day and looked beautiful.” Hussain Shah Chak (1563-70) was a regular participant in this festival. Suka, the last Sanskrit Chronicler records that the king fixed on the appointed day a mark so high that it could not be easily seen, and gave rich prizes in “elephant, horse and wealth” to him who succeeded in hitting the mark.

Following close on the Caitra festival was that of Sripancami, celebrated on the fifth of the dark fortnight of Vaisakha (May). A fair

<sup>1</sup> *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 124-25.

was held on the Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar. This festival was noted for its gaiety, and the people amused themselves in various ways. "Some", records Suka, the Chronicler, "held bouquets tastefully made of beautiful flowers to their noses; some were intoxicated and became uneasy when women, strangers to them, smiled; some drank wine and adorned their persons with flowers." Dance and music recitals were given, and the king gave away "clothes of gold and of silver" to the outstanding artists.

Desideri who visited Kashmir in 1714 also records that crowds of people ascended the Sankaracarya hill on a certain day to celebrate a festival.

The Sultans used to participate in a "festival of flowers" held in the district of Maraz.<sup>1</sup> During the Mughal times, the emperors particularly Jehangir and his charming queen Nur Jehan celebrated with their courtiers the festival of roses in their newly-built gardens by the Dal lake or under the chenar trees. Moore in his *Lalla Rookh* has immortalised the Feast of Roses, when it was

"all love and light,  
Visions by day and feasts by night."

The Hindus celebrated their festivals as usual, barring of course during the years when religious persecutions were let loose upon them. During Sikandar's time they could not perform their religious rites freely and so was the case under the rule of most of the Afghan governors. But kings like Sultan Zain-ul-abidin and the Mughal emperors not only encouraged the celebration of religious festivals, but personally participated in them. When, for instance, the inmates of a monastery celebrated the festival of Shivratri or "the worship of vessels", Sultan Zain-ul-abidin "forgot his high rank and helped them in their worship."<sup>2</sup> The Hindus performed pilgrimages to holy places like the Ganga lake and Amarnath. During the civil war between Muhammad Shah and Fateh Shah in the middle of the fifteenth century, the Hindus, due to the disturbed and chaotic conditions prevailing in the Valley, were unable to deposit the ashes of their dead relatives in the Ganga lake at the foot of the Haramukh peak. But with the return of a short-lived peace, the then Sultan, Fateh Shah, persuaded them to perform the pilgrimage and made arrangements for an armed escort to accompany the pilgrims. Nature, however, was against them and while "returning they were suddenly overtaken by storm and rain and perished to the number of ten thousand."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *King of Kishmira*. p. 195-245.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 348.

With the spread of Islam, the festivals of Id-ul-Fitr and Id-ul-Zuha attained great importance. The Sultans and the Mughal emperors who scrupulously observed the Ramadan fast attended the mass prayers at the Idgah. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin did not take meat during the month of Ramadan and his subjects followed suit.

The participation of Muslim kings in Hindu and Muslim festivals not only shows their enlightened outlook on religion, but also their keen desire to identify themselves with the people in general. The fact that the festival of Vethtruvah was celebrated by all classes of people in as late a time as the reign of Jehangir when most of the population had already accepted Islam, shows the prevalence of religious and communal amity among the people of medieval Kashmir.

#### PASTIMES

Among the games played during the medieval times, polo held a place of honour. Every town and city had a polo-ground called *chawgan*<sup>1</sup> and where there was none, the game was played in the main thoroughfare and watched by people from shops and windows. The game was perhaps introduced into Kashmir from Gilgit where it is still popular. Ali Shah Chak (1570-78) was very fond of the game and lost his life as a result of a fall from his pony while playing it at Idgah in Srinagar.

The game of the common people was the simpler version of polo—hockey. We have a reference to this game in a Saying of Lalleshwari, wherein she explains from a metaphor drawn from this game that instruction given to the foolish worldly man returns to the giver, as a hockey ball bounds back when it strikes a goal-pillar and misses the goal.<sup>2</sup> There were other manly games too like single-sticks and fights with slings for the people to amuse themselves with.<sup>3</sup>

The favourite pastime of the royalty and of the nobles was hunting. Sultan Shihab-ud-din was fond of hunting lions and tigers, and on one occasion nearly lost his life while trying to kill one with his sword.<sup>4</sup> The Sayyids were very fond of hunting deer and of falconry. Sultan Hassan Shah (1472-84) took special pleasure in the latter sport and "his hawks brought down many birds as presents to the king."<sup>5</sup> Sitting in a boat on the lakes, the Kashmiri sportsman took pleasure in watching his hawk strike the wild-fowl in mid-air, pick it up from the

1 The open plateau near Kishtwar town is still called Chawgan.

2 Temple, *The Word of Lalla*, p. 208.

3 Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 255.

4 *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 45-46.

5 *Ibid.*, p. 263.



surface of the lake where it invariably fell, and bring it before its master in present.

Besides these the outdoor sports in which the people, particularly the martial classes, participated, were archery, fencing and javelin-throwing. Among the indoor games dice and chess were popular.<sup>1</sup>

On festivals and social functions like marriage and child-birth, jugglers, folk dancers, and folk musicians entertained the people. From the time of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin display of fireworks was also an item of enjoyment. There were occasional concerts and musical events. The *Bands* or *Bhagats* gave performances of open-air drama, portraying the city and village life in a most vivid manner.<sup>2</sup> Poetical symposia were also held now and then; and minstrels recited verses to the accompaniment of a guitar.

The Mughals who were given to the pleasures of life and who dressed up the beauty-spots of the Valley, encouraged by their example the 'eat-drink-and-be-merry' habits among the people of Kashmir. Abul Fazal in his *Ain-i-Akbari* writes that "the inhabitants go upon the lakes in small boats to enjoy the diversion of hawking. They have partridges, the elk is also found here, and they train leopards to hunt them....."

This gay spirit stood the people in good stead during the tyrannous days of later rulers. George Forster who visited the Valley in 1783, when it was ruled by an Afghan tyrant, Azad Khan, observes:

"The Kashmirians are gay and lovely people, with strong propensities to pleasure. None are more eager in the pursuit of wealth, have more inventive faculties in acquiring it, or who devise more modes of luxurious expense. When a Kashmiri, even of the lowest order, finds himself in the possession of ten shillings, he loses no time in assembling his party, and launching into the lake, solaces himself till the last farthing is spent. Nor can the despotism of an Afghan Government, which loads them with various oppressions and cruelty, eradicate this strong tendency to dissipation; yet their manners, it is said, have undergone a manifest change since the dismemberment of their country from Hindustan. Encouraged by the liberality and indulgence of the Mughals, they gave a loose to their pleasures and the bent of their genius....."

#### CONVEYANCES

There was no material change in the form of conveyance used in the medieval times from that existing in the time of the earlier rulers.

1 *Ibid.*, p. 338.

2 Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 256.

The pack-pony continued to carry the exports from and imports into the Valley. Kashmir raised horses and ponies on its vast meadows and Jehangir notes that the Kashmir-bred horses were fetching prices up to a thousand rupees. But more important than the pony was the human back. It was for this that the system of levying *Begar* or forced labour for the carriage of goods came early into vogue, and continued till recent times. Abul Fazal records that men were used for the carriage of heavy loads over the hilly country. Bernier who visited Kashmir in the train of Aurangzeb mentions that in spite of the fact that for a month before the royal camp reached Bhimber immense quantities of baggage and stores had been sent on, thirty thousand porters were employed of whom six thousand were required for the king alone.

There were only narrow tracks over the mountain passes and no roads fit for wheeled traffic. Ponies and men also served as carriers of goods from one part of the Valley to another. The river Jhelum and its numerous tributaries and canals served as the main highways of internal trade. All kinds of boats from the tiny *shikara* to the big cargo boat (*Bahats*) plied on its waters. We learn from the *Ain-i-Akbari* that boats were the centre upon which all commerce moved. Perhaps the modern house-boat had its origin under Akbar who, disliking the shape of the boats on the Jhelum, ordered the construction of a thousand double-storeyed boats on the Bengal model and soon there was a floating city on water.<sup>1</sup> The boatmen who had accepted Islam in early medieval times, had to pay a tax according to age, which continued to be levied throughout the Muslim rule.

The rivers were spanned by permanent as well as boat-bridges. We have already noted that under the Hindu rule there existed no permanent bridges. The first bridge on the cantilever principle was built by Zain-ul-abidin. In the hilly tracts the river was spanned by rope bridges generally formed of three cables made of twisted twigs. We have a mention of the existence of boat bridges in Sharaf-ud-din Yazdi's *Zaffar-nama*.

The upper classes travelled on litters carried by porters. The kings and their harems travelled on elephants but these proved, due to narrow and steep tracks on mountain passes, very cumbrous. Bernier mentions an unfortunate accident having occurred to the ladies of the harem who travelled to Kashmir on elephants in the train of Aurangzeb. The foremost elephant, at a narrow point in the way, stepped back, forcing the elephants behind it off the path and down the hill-side. The ladies whom they were carrying escaped, but the elephants were abandoned to their fate.

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1 Sufi, *Kashir*, p. 588-89.

## SOCIAL SERVICES

The department of religious affairs was under the Sheikh-ul-Islam. It maintained the mosques and provided *imams* and preachers with stipends or grants. It also subsidized the theological institutions by giving grants to deserving scholars and teachers.

Educational institutions were mostly founded by pious donors who left large endowments for their maintenance. Monarchs, queens, nobles and traders vied with one another in promoting education, and the State helped the effort by its patronage of learning and scholarship. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin was a great patron of scholars and artists and opened a number of schools. The first Kashmir Sultan, however, to establish *madrasas* or schools in different parts of the Valley was Shihab-ud-din. Sultan Qutb-ud-din set up a residential school and an university in his newly founded town of Qutbdinpora. It had a hostel attached to it where board and lodging were free for both teachers and pupils. Sultan Sikandar also opened many schools and founded a college and a hostel and attached these to the Jama Masjid which he had built.

The tradition of founding educational institutions was continued by Sultan Hassan. Gul Khatun, the mother of the Sultan, Hayat Khatun, his queen, Shah Begum, the wife of his prime minister and nobles like Nauroz and Tazi Bhatt took great interest in education and established schools at their own expense. Similarly, the Chak rulers who followed the Shahmir Sultans to the throne of Kashmir, patronized education and founded several schools. Hussain Shah, for instance, opened a college to which he assigned the revenues of Zainapura. The college had a library and a hostel, which were also endowed.

The Mughals were great patrons of learning and many colleges and universities were founded by them in Kashmir. Dara Shikoh, for instance, established a college of Sufism and also an observatory in Srinagar.

The royal court also patronized physicians and the study of Ayurvedic and Unani systems of medicine. Sharya Bhatt, for example, was Zain-ul-abidin's court physician. There also existed a number of hospitals in Srinagar as well as in larger towns. The Muslim kings also distributed large sums of money to the poor, and on festivals food was served to mendicants and the physically handicapped.

Besides, there were the *Ziarats* and *Khanaqahs* under the charge of Rishis and Sufis, which provided shelter and food to the needy and in times of distress due to natural calamities like famines, fires and epidemics, people turned to these for solace and succour.



It will be clear from a study of the political history of Kashmir during the medieval period that the standard of life which definitely improved with the advent of the rule of the Shahmiri Sultans, deteriorated towards the end of the rule of their dynasty and also under the Chaks when Kashmir became a fertile ground for political intrigue and civil war. With the opening up of the Valley after its conquest by the Mughals there was, however, an increase in trade and commerce and together with the settlement of land revenue, prosperity returned to the land. But with the decline of the power of the later Mughal emperors, Kashmir again fell into disorder, to be engulfed later by the tyrannical rule of the Afghans which reduced the people to penury and hardship.

It is, however, its art and culture and particularly the assimilation and synthesis of the various currents and influences which affected the land that has earned for medieval Kashmir a special distinction. Under the broad-minded and tolerant Sultans like Zain-ul-abidin, and cultured Mughals like Jehangir and Shah Jehan, Kashmir attained a high position as a centre of learning and art. And even the crushing burdens of political and economic slavery that the people had to bear later, did not succeed in wiping off their broad humanistic outlook on life, and they continued to keep alight the torch of religious toleration and high cultural values.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### RELIGION AND PHILOSOPHY

WHILE the fascinating valley of Kashmir was yet under the rule of the Hindu Lohara dynasty and Kalhana was giving his final touches to his monumental history, the *Rajatarangini*, North-West India was witnessing the end of an era. The old order was changing rapidly with the advent of Muhammadan rule. Though the Islamic movement was of relatively recent growth, it was yet powerfully forcing itself on the ancient and firmly established social and religious institutions of the country. There was "a clashing of fundamental convictions, a conflict of realism with idealism, of the material with the visionary, of the concrete with the abstract."<sup>1</sup> New values were being set up in art and literature and a chain of action and reaction resulted in a slow and imperceptible synthesis of the two fundamentally opposite cultures.

#### SPREAD OF ISLAM

Perhaps the best example of this synthesis is provided by medieval Kashmir which, as mentioned earlier, came under the influence of the new religion peacefully and was spared the violent birthpangs that ushered in the new order in the rest of the country. For over two centuries following Mahmud Ghazni's expeditions to north and west of India, Kashmir sealed itself up behind its mountain ramparts, secure against the attacks of the zealous armies of Muhammadan invaders. But cultural influences and ideas could not be shut out, however high the enclosing walls might be. Islamic missionaries and adventurers carried the teachings of the new religion into the Valley. Most of these missionaries belonged to one or the other of the Order of Sufis from Persia and Bukhara. How these saints and their teachings influenced the already rich cultural heritage of Kashmir will be clear from a reference to the development of Sufism and its propagation in the Valley by devoted and selfless missionaries.

#### ISLAMIC MYSTICS

Islam on coming into contact with Mahayana Buddhism in Central Asia and in some parts of Persia, could not but be influenced

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Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, p. 1.

by its philosophic thought, and the devotion and ardour of its monks. The religious tolerance and harmlessness to all life as taught by its scriptures had a moderating effect on a good proportion of the followers of the new faith. It was, therefore, a matter of time when in the process of the synthesis of the two religions, there should evolve a new school of Islamic mystics—the Sufis.

By the end of the ninth century, Islam had begun to ossify itself into a system of formulas and observances and Sufism appeared as a reaction of the spirit against the letter. There was felt a need for a 'heart' religion and the Brahmanic Pantheism and Buddhistic Nihilism alike teaching the unreality of the seeming world, attracted the attention of the Sufi doctors, although their mysticism is less intense and practical but more airy and literary in character.

Mysticism, therefore, made great progress in Persia and assumed the character of a sect there. A certain Abu Sayyid was the first who advised his disciples to forsake the world and embrace a monastic life in order to devote themselves exclusively to meditation and contemplation ; a practice borrowed from the Hindu and Buddhist religions. The disciples of Abu Sayyid wore a garment of wool (*Suf*) whence they received the name of Sufis.

Sufism spread more and more in Persia, the home of a people imbibed with the teachings of various Asiatic religions and was enthusiastically embraced by those who wished to give themselves up undisturbed to philosophical speculation. In its first form Sufism was quite compatible with Muslim dogma. It was satisfied to profess a contempt for life and an exclusive love of God, and to extol ascetic practices, as the fittest means of procuring those states of ecstasy during which the soul was supposed to contemplate the Supreme Being face to face. But by degrees, thanks to the adepts whom it drew from the ranks of heterodoxy, Sufism departed from its original purpose and entered upon discussions respecting the Divine nature which finally led to Pantheism. The increasing tendency towards Pantheism and ascetic practices are thus the main scope of Sufism. The former was the result of contacts and discussions with the followers of Hindu philosophy and the latter was borrowed from Buddhist monkery in Central Asia. "The great movement of mysticism, inspite of the Greek and Indian origin of much of its philosophical skeleton and terminology, is the most significant genuinely Islamic contribution to the religious experience of mankind."<sup>1</sup>

Its principal argument was that God being one, the creation must

1 Grunebaum, *Medieval Islam*.



make a part of His Being, since otherwise it would exist externally to Him and would form a principle distinct from Him, which would be equal to looking on the universe as a deity opposed to God. In their view, God is immanent in all things and is the essence of every human soul. There is not only no God but God, but no being, life or spirit except the being, life and spirit of God.<sup>1</sup> These doctrines shocked the orthodox Muslim opinion and in the reign of Moktadir, a Persian Sufi named Haltaj, who taught publicly that every man is God, was tortured and put to death.

Several of the chief *dervish* orders took their birth from various accomplished Sufis—Abdul-al-Jilani, who founded the Qadiriya Order; Ahmad-ul-Rifai, the Rifaiya ; Jalal-ud-din Rumi, the Mawaliya ; etc. Rumi who was the most uncompromising Sufi was the greatest Pantheistic writer of all ages. Of the later Order may be named the Naqshbandiya, which has been the most important in the Khanates of Turkistan.

There were too among the Naqshbandiyas exercises in the restraint of breathing, strongly reminiscent of the Yoga exercises of the Hindus. There is much in common between the Saiva philosophy and Sufism. The cardinal doctrine of Sufis that all forms of religion are equal appealed to the intellectuals of the age.<sup>2</sup>

#### SAYYID BULBUL SHAH

It was thus fortunate that Islam entered Kashmir from Central Asia, the land which owed so much to Kashmir in the realm of art and philosophy. The first name associated with the propagation of the new faith of whom we find a record in the annals of Kashmir, was Bulbul Shah. He appears to have deeply impressed the people by his personal example, his methods of preaching and persuasion, at a time when the fortunes of the ruling dynasty were in the melting pot and the people were passing through a period of political instability, heavy taxation, and crushing burdens of feudalism. Above all he was responsible for initiating the new ruler into the fold of Islam and thus elevating it to the status of State religion.

Bulbul Shah or Sayyid Bilal Shah is said to have visited Kashmir first in the time of king Sahadeva, the predecessor of Rinchin. He was a widely travelled Musavi Sayyid from Turkistan, and was a "disciple of Shah Niamatullah Wali Farsi, Khalifa of the Suhrawardi *tariq* or school of Sufis founded originally by Sheikh Shihab-ud-din Suhrawardi.<sup>3</sup>

1 Rev. R. Flint, *Ency, Britt.*, (10th Ed.) vol. xxiii, p. 242.

2 Temple, *The Word of Lalla*

3 Sufi, *Kashir*, p. 82.

The circumstances which led to the conversion of Rinchin to Islam have already been mentioned. Suffice it to say here that with this first success of his mission, Bulbul Shah acquired great influence in the Valley and very soon he effected the conversion of Rinchin's brother-in-law and commander-in-chief and several others to his creed. The first mosque was built at the place now called Bulbul Lankar, below the fifth bridge in Srinagar. Bulbul Shah died in 1327 A.D. and lies buried near the mosque. His lieutenant, Mulla Ahmed, carried on the mission till his death in the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-din and is buried near the grave of his preceptor. The Mulla was made the first Sheikh-ul-Islam and is the author of two books, *Fataw-i-Shihabi* and *Shihab-i-Saqib*.

#### SAYYID ALI HAMADANI

After Bulbul Shah came other Sufis, like Sayyid Jalal-ud-din of Bukhara ; and Sayyid Taj-ud-din who arrived in the reign of Sultan Shihab-ud-din (1354-73 A.D.) and was accompanied by Sayyid Mas'ud and Sayyid Yusuf, his disciples. But the most prominent among the Sufi missionaries was Sayyid Ali Hamadani who "by his learning, piety and devotion, is said to have made 37,000 converts to Islam."<sup>1</sup> Known in Kashmir as Shah Hanādan he may well be said to have practically established Islam in Kashmir and laid its foundations well and true.

The great Sayyid, also known as Amir-i-Kabir or the great Amir, was born at Hamadan in 1314 A.D. His geneology can be traced to Hazrat Ali through Imam Husain. Born in a family with traditions of scholarship and piety, Sayyid Ali learnt the holy Quran by heart while in his teens. He studied Islamic theology and learnt the secrets of Sufi doctrines and practices under the tuition of his learned uncle, Sayyid Alau-ud-din Simnani. Later he became the spiritual disciple of Sheikh Sharaf-ud-din Muzdaqani who advised him to complete his education by extensive travels in foreign countries. For twenty-one years Sayyid Ali journeyed from one country to the other and came in contact with contemporary scholars and saints of note. When he returned home in 1370 A.D. he found that the political conditions in Persia had undergone a change during his absence, and Timur who ruled Persia had unleashed a policy of repression against the Sayyids, forcing most of them out of the country. Sayyid Ali Hamadani accompanied by seven hundred more Sayyids, left Persia to escape the tyrannical rule of Timur and entered Kashmir in 1372 A.D. Sultan Shihab-ud-din was the reigning king. The Sultan was at that time on one of his military expeditions against

1 Saadat, *Bulbul Shah*, pp. 7, 23.

the ruler of Kabul and his brother, Qutb-ud-din had the honour of receiving the party of Sayyids and waiting upon them for four months, after which they left on a pilgrimage to Mecca. Seven years later (in 1379) Shah Hamadan again visited the Valley and stayed there for over two and a half years. He paid a third visit to Kashmir in 1387, but had to leave early on account of ill-health. While at Pakhli in Hazara district, he had a relapse and passed away in 1384. His disciples carried the dead body to Khutlan where it lies buried. A monument to the Sayyid stands at Pakhli, "of which", writes Babar in his *Diary*, "I made the circuit (*tawaf*) when I came and took Chaghan-Sarai in 920 A.H. (1514 A.D.)."

Sayyid Ali Hamadani was a versatile genius, a great saint and a scholar. He wrote profusely on Sufism and elucidated several earlier works on the subject. Although a great authority on theology and philosophy, he did not disdain to write on such varied secular subjects as jurisprudence, political science and the science of physiognomy. Author of more than a hundred works on logic, ethics, and other subjects in prose, Sayyid Ali also wrote Persian poetry of no mean order. His odes are naturally Sufistic and his mystical poems illustrate his broad humanistic outlook on life and religion.

Sayyid Ali's visits to Kashmir, particularly the one in 1372 when he was accompanied by seven hundred Sayyids who had to leave Persia following Timur's invasion of that country and his decision to exterminate the Alavi Sayyids of Hamadan, had a profound influence on the spread of Islam in the Valley. A leader of the great Naqshbandiya Order of Sufis, founded by his contemporary Khwaja Muhammad Bahau-ud-din Naqshband (1319—89) of Bukhara, Sayyid Ali Hamadani obtained great influence over the ruler, Sultan Qutb-ud-din. He was received with great warmth and respect and lodged along with his followers in a hospice in the Alaudinpura quarter of Srinagar. Some of his learned followers visited the remote corners of the Valley and by their religious discourses effected the conversion of a large number of people to Islam.

Till then the new religion had not made any appreciable headway in the Valley, even though the Sultans had been its followers. The majority of the people being still Hindu, the Muslims had nothing to distinguish them in dress, manners and customs from their compatriots. In Alaudinpura, for instance, there was a temple which was visited every morning both by the Sultan and his Muslim subjects.<sup>1</sup> To avert the recurrence of famines "the king performed a *Yagna* in the month of

<sup>1</sup> *Fatahat-i-Kubrivi* f. 1470 a



Bhadra, and distributed large gifts.”<sup>1</sup> In contravention of the Islamic teachings he had two wives who were sisters. Sayyid Ali disapproved of these practices and in accordance with his advice, Qutb-ud-din divorced one of the sisters and retained the other. He also advised the Sultan to adopt the dress common in Muslim countries. However, “anxious not to antagonise his non-Muslim subjects, Qutb-ud-din did not follow every advice of the Sayyid, but he held him in great reverence and visited him every day. Sayyid Ali gave him a cap which, out of respect, the Sultan always wore under his crown. The subsequent Sultans followed the same practice until the cap was buried along with the body of Fateh Shah according to the latter’s will.”<sup>2</sup>

That Sayyid Ali Hamadani’s deep scholarship and his spiritual attainments were responsible for the furtherence of the conversion of the Valley to Islam, goes without saying. He came in contact with the popular Saiva teacher Lalleshwari and the great Sufi saint Sheikh Nur-ud-din, and had long discourses with them on spiritual and philosophic subjects. Lalleshwari’s accociation with Shah Hamadan was due to an identity of the faith of Sufis and Hindu mendicants and saints in Kashmir. The Sufis had charm of manners and attractive personalities and treating all religions alike they naturally preferred the faith to which they themselves belonged and which their patrons favoured. It was, therefore, natural that they should have influenced the people among whom they lived and worked and thus facilitated the peaceful propagation of Islam among the general mass of people in Kashmir.

#### MIR MUHAMMAD HAMADANI

Sayyid Ali Hamadani’s work was continued by his disciples and more particularly by Mir Muhammad Hamadani. Born in 1372, Mir Muhammad was only twelve years old at the time of his father’s death, and his education in theology and Sufism was conducted under the prominent admirers and followers of his father—Khwaja Ishaq of Khutlan and Maulana Nur-ud-din Jafar of Badakhshan. He soon attained pre-eminence as a scholar and saint and arrived in Kashmir with three hundred Sayyids when only twenty-two years of age. This influx of a large number of Sayyids into Kashmir was no doubt the direct result of the tyranny and self-assertion of first the Mongols and then of Timur. “They were attracted to the Valley owing to the peace that prevailed there compared to the social and political upheavals that were characteristic of Central Asia and Persia during this period. Moreover, they also came on account of the patronage that was extend-

1 Jonaraja, *Kings of Kashmira*, p. 53.

2 Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, pp. 56-57.

ed to them by the Sultans.”<sup>1</sup>

Mir Muhammad stayed in the Valley for about twenty-two years and then left to perform the Haj pilgrimage. The presence of a large number of Sayyids, imbued deeply with the Sufistic doctrines and practices stimulated the tendency to mysticism among Kashmiris for which Saivism and Buddhism had already laid a foundation. This was mainly responsible for not only the adoption of Muslim faith by the general mass of people, but moulding their character and outlook on life on a humanistic and tolerant plane.

But not all the Sayyids who entered Kashmir during this time were devout Sufis. Many of them upheld the orthodox and puritanic views on Islam. In order to gain favours and privileges from the Sultans, they actively interfered with the politics of the State. This culminated in the narrow-minded religious policies adopted by Sultan Sikandar and his minister, Malik Suha Bhatt, who embraced Islam at the hands of Mir Hamadani. In contrast to the peaceful propagation of Islam by the earlier Sufis, through example and precept, Malik Suha Bhatt, with the active support of Sultan Sikandar, indulged in forcible conversion of Brahmans and destruction of their temples. Of course Sayyid Mir Muhammad Hamadani looked with disfavour on this policy and it was on his advice that Sikandar changed it forthwith. A strong reaction during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin against this policy resulted in the proclamation of complete freedom of conscience and tolerance to all religious beliefs.

But the mode of conversion adopted by Suha Bhatt and Sikandar naturally brought about its own revenge, and reacted on their concept of Islam. The converts, and through them their leaders, were unable to resist the Hindu philosophy and trend of thought. This resulted in the emergence of a remarkable School or Order of Sufis in Kashmir—the Islamic Rishis—who wielded enormous influence on the religious and philosophical beliefs of the people, and moulded their mind and set up the ideal of religious tolerance and abiding faith in the grace of God.

#### SHEIKH NUR-UD-DIN *alias* NAND RISHI

Foremost among them was Sheikh Nur-ud-din, the patron-saint of Kashmir. Revered alike by the Hindus and Muslims of Kashmir, Sheikh Nur-ud-din *alias* Nand Rishi, or Sahazanand, was born in 1377 A.D. at Kaimuh, a village two miles to the west of the important town of Bijbihara (ancient Vijayesa), twenty-six miles from Srinagar on the Jammu road. His ancestors belonged to a noble family of Kishtwar

<sup>1</sup> Hasan, *Kashmir Under the Sultans*, p. 221-22.

and had emigrated to the Valley. His father, Salar Sanz, was a pious man and came under the spiritual influence of a Sufi saint, Yasman Rishi, who arranged his marriage to Sadra Maji. The child of their union was Nand Rishi, the great founder of the Order of the Rishis of Kashmir.

In his very childhood Nand Rishi gave proof of his saintly nature. He held himself aloof from the daily affairs of the family and though apprenticed to several trades, showed no inclination for any of them. Finally he gave up the world, lived in a cave for twelve years practising penances which reduced him almost to a skeleton. His fame as a saint and the glory of his spiritual attainments travelled far and wide, attracting to him a great number of followers. Though unable to read and write, he gave utterance to hundreds of beautiful Sayings which furnish the Kashmiri literature with gems having both a terrestrial as well as celestial meaning. Concise, and objective in their approach, they have been stamped in people's memories. They are collected and preserved in two volumes called the *Rishi Nama* and *Nur Nama*; but because of the transliteration in the Persian alphabet, many of them are not easily deciphered.

Nand Rishi exhorted his followers to perform good actions. That he said, was the secret of happiness in this world as well as in the life to come :

*The dog is barking in the compound,  
O Brothers ! give ear and listen to (what he says) :  
"As one sowed, so did he reap ;  
Thou, Nand, sow, sow, sow !"*

Of his experiences in a lonely cave where he led an austere life, he says:

*The cave seems to me to be a celestial castle ;  
The quilt seems to me to be a silken garment.  
I play with the rats as if they were creatures of good omen to me.  
One year seems to me to be one single hour.*

He preached that all men should lead disciplined lives and none should fall a prey to wordly desires :

*Desire is like the knotted wood of the forest,  
It cannot be made into planks, beams or into cradles ;  
He who cut and felled it,  
Will burn it into ashes.*

Religious schisms were raising their head in his time and Nand Rishi warns the Kashmiris against the snares of false prophets in the following terms :

*I saw a priest blowing out fire (and)*



*Beating a drum to others ;  
 The priests have nice big turbans on their heads ;  
 They walk about daintily dressed.  
 Dressed in priestly robes they indulge in mutton,  
 They run away with cooking pots under their arms.*

He ridicules the pretentious nature of a priest, addressing him thus :

*Thy rosary is like a snake ;  
 Thou bendest it on seeing the disciples ;  
 Thou hast eaten six platefuls, one like another ;  
 If thou art a priest then who are robbers.*

Nand Rishi also left what might be called a note on the state of the world to come :

*During this Iron Age I found liars prospering ;  
 In the house of the pious I found grief born of poverty.*

He constantly advised the seeking of good company and shunning the bad, contrasting the two in forceful terms. He showed that rogues will always wrong the good, attacking them with dishonest words if one lacked in care and gave them such opportunities :

*Spend thy days with the good—  
 The SHAH WULGA (one of the best kinds of rice) will get pounded,  
 Never go about with the wicked—  
 Do not walk close to pots covered with  
 soot (else thou shalt get soiled).*

He also held that devotion to God lay in leading a disciplined life. It availed men nothing to carry out the rites and rituals of religion in a cold and mechanical manner.

*Having washed thy face, thou hast called the believers to prayer ;  
 How can I know, O Rishi, what thou feelest in thy heart, or what  
 thy bows are for ?*

*Thou hast lived a life without seeing (God) ;  
 Tell me to whom didst thou offer prayer.  
 If thou listeneth to truth, thou oughtest to subdue the five (senses)  
 If thou lowereth only the fleshy body, the fleshy body will not save  
 thee ;  
 If thou maketh union with Siva,  
 Then only, O Rishi Mali, will prayer avail thee.*

Of true worship he says :

*Do not go to Sheikh and priest and Mullah ;  
 Do not feed the cattle on ARKHOR (poisonous) leaves ;*

*Do not shut thyself up in mosques or forests ;  
Enter thine own body with breath controlled in communion with  
God.*

Sheikh Nur-ud-din acquired enormous influence over the people of Kashmir and when he passed away at an advanced age, king Zain-ul-abidin himself was the chief mourner at his funeral. His grave at Tsrar Sharif is an object of pilgrimage, Kashmiris of all religions and communities flocking to it every year. The extent of the veneration in which his memory has been cherished may be gauged from the fact that nearly four centuries after his death, Atta Muhammad Khan, an Afghan governor, in order to win the sympathy and support of the people of Kashmir, struck coins in the name of Sheikh Nur-ud-din. No other saint perhaps in human history has ever had coins struck in his honour.

#### [THE ORDER OF ISLAMIC RISHIS

During his life-time Nand Rishi founded an Order of Rishis, and it is noteworthy that this Order had members from amongst Hindus and Muslims and commanded the respect and homage of all Kashmiris, irrespective of their caste or creed. Janak Rishi of Aishmuqam, Rishi Mol of Anantnag, Bata Mol, Rishi Pir, Thagababa Sahib of Srinagar, belonged to the same Order. The political, social and economic travail and suffering through which the land had to pass, was considerably lightened by the comforting words and kind acts of these highly advanced souls. To them goes the credit of keeping the people firm to the ideals of love and toleration. They lived among the common people, shared their troubles and pains. No better tribute can be paid to them than that recorded by Abul Fazal :

“The most respectable people of Kashmir are the Rishis who, although they do not suffer themselves to be fettered by traditions, are doubtless true worshippers of God. They revile not any other sect and ask nothing of anyone ; they plant the roads with fruit trees to furnish the traveller with refreshments ; they abstain from flesh and have no intercourse with the other sex. There are two thousand of these Rishis in Kashmir.”

Jehangir was also impressed with their piety and utter self-abnegation. In his *Memoirs*<sup>1</sup> he speaks of these Rishis as possessing simplicity and though not having religious knowledge or learning, being without pretence. “They restrain the tongue of desire and the foot of seeking,” continues he in his florid style, “and eat no flesh.

1 *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri*; trans. by Rogers and Beveridge, Vol. II, pp. 149-50.

They have no wives, and always plant fruit-bearing trees in the fields so that men may benefit by them, themselves desiring no advantage."

Every district and village had its *Asthan* where a Rishi took his abode and practised meditation. Their graves and relics are objects of respect and veneration to this day. The shrines attest to their founders' austerities and virtues. "Associated as they are with acts of piety and self-denial," observes Lawrence, "the *Ziarat* are pleasant places of meeting at fair time, and the natural beauty of their position and surroundings afford additional attraction. Noble brotherhood of venerable trees, of chenar, elms and poplar with its white bark and shimmer of silver leaves, gives a pleasant shade, and there is always some spring of water for the thirsty."<sup>1</sup>

#### MIR SHAMS-UD-DIN IRAQI

An event of great importance in the spread of Islam in Kashmir was the arrival in about 1492 A.D. of a preacher from Talish on the shores of the Caspian, named Shams-ud-din Iraqi, who described himself as the disciple of Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh of Khorasan. His father was a Musavi Sayyid and it appears that he was converted to Nurbakhshi beliefs early in his life. He entered the service of Sultan Hussain Mirza Baiqara (1469-1506) of Herat and was sent by him as his envoy in 1481 to the court of Sultan Hassan Shah of Kashmir. For eight years he stayed in Kashmir and though prevented by the nature of his post to take an active part in the religious or political movements in Kashmir, nevertheless made a keen study of the people and their leaders. He even converted secretly two preachers to his faith, and having aroused suspicion among the orthodox *Ulama*, he was forced to leave Kashmir.

But it was in 1492 that he came back to Kashmir to carry on his religious mission.

Shams-ud-din, however, professed to be an orthodox Sunni like most of the inhabitants of the Valley, but the doctrine he preached was "conforming neither to the Sunni nor to the Shia creeds." The way that ultimately led to the preachings among, and converts from the people of Kashmir to the Shia sect, is the story of a constant struggle and strife among Sunnis and followers of Mir Shams-ud-din.

In fact, the Nurbakhshi movement was an offshoot of the Sufi cult prevailing in Persia, and its founder, Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh claimed to have seen the Divine Light and to have received the esoteric teachings of Ali through the Imam Jafar-i-Sadiq.

<sup>1</sup> *The Valley*, pp. 207-8.



Naturally the teachings of Sayyid Muhammad Nurbakhsh had a tendency towards the Shia tenets, and Shams-ud-din Iraqi who was his follower reflected these while conducting his proselytising mission in Kashmir. With his eloquence and learning, he soon succeeded in converting a number of people to the Nurbakhshi sect, the most important person being Musa Raina, a powerful noble, who gave him money to carry on his work and also land at Zadibal, a suburb to the north of Srinagar, to build a *Khanaqah* on.

But inspite of the initial success, Mir Shams-ud-din had to face great obstacles. His patron, Musa Raina, soon fell from power and the influential Sayyid noble, Muhammad Baihaqi, the chief minister of Sultan Muhammad Shah, drove him out of the Valley to Baltistan. There he continued his missionary activities and converted nearly the whole population to the Shia creed. After some time when Musa Raina returned to power, he was recalled by the latter to Srinagar. As long as his patron enjoyed power, Shams-ud-din had the fullest support and co-operation from the government in his activities and it was then that he converted the turbulent Chak tribe too, thus giving a religious character to the subsequent race for power between the Shahmir Sultans and the Chaks.

The first severe setback that the Nurbakhshis had was at the hands of Mirza Haider Dughlat. He was an orthodox Sunni and looked with disfavour on any departure from the letter of Islamic tradition or dogma. Besides it served his political ends to bring down his heavy hand on the Nurbakhshis and other Sufi sects, hoping thus to gain the support and goodwill of the orthodox Sunnis. He was thus able for some time to easily impose his rule and his Mughal officials on the people of the Valley. Writes he in great wrath and venom :<sup>1</sup>

“At the present time in Kashmir, the Sufis have legitimatised so many heresies that they know nothing of what is lawful or unlawful. They consider that piety and purity consist in night-watching and abstinence in food. They are for ever interpreting dreams, displaying miracles and obtaining from the unseen, information regarding either the future or the past. They prostrate themselves before one another and, together with such disgraceful acts observe the forty days (of retirement). In short nowhere else is such a band of heretics to be found. May the most High God defend all the people of Islam from such misfortune and calamities as this, and turn them all into the true path of righteousness.....

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1 *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, p. 436.

"Thanks be to God that at the present time no one in Kashmir dares openly profess this faith ; but all deny it, and give themselves out as good Sunnis. They are aware of my severity towards them, and know that if any one of the sect appears, he will not escape the punishment of death."

But the spirit which animated the religious beliefs of Kashmir asserted itself soon and with the death of Mirza Haider Dughlat, several Sufi saints and Islamic Rishis carried on openly their activities all over the Valley. A noted saint who wielded a powerful influence on the masses was Sheikh Hamza Makhdum. Born in 1494 A.D. Sheikh Hamza studied under a well-known scholar of his time, Baba Ismail Qubravi, whose school stood at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill.

Sheikh Hamza was, however, forced by the Shia ruler, Ghazi Shah Chak to leave Srinagar. He established his seat in the village of Biru (about 20 miles from Srinagar on the road to Magam) and won a large number of disciples. In course of time he became a force in the Valley and when the Chak tyranny became unbearable, he blessed the mission of Baba Daud Khaki, his disciple, and Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi, the learned theologian and poet, to Akbar's court to induce him to annex Kashmir to his expanding empire.

Both Sheikh Hamza and Baba Daud Khaki were responsible for converting a large number of people to Islam and also in setting up mosques in the Valley. Sheikh Hamza died in 1586 at an advanced age and lies buried on the south-eastern spur of the Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar. The tomb attracts large crowds who offer *Fatiha* to the Sheikh and some of his disciples who lie buried nearby.

#### USE OF FORCE

It would, however, be wrong to assert that the spread of Islam in the Valley was throughout effected peacefully and without the use of force. Though the Valley had no conqueror like Mahmud, nor a warrior like Shihab-ud-din Ghorî, nor a general like Muhammad bin Qasim, it had yet religious zealots like Sultan Sikandar, Sultan Ali Shah, Mirza Haider Dughlat, Yaqub Shah Chak, Mughal governors Itqad Khan and Ibrahim Khan, and most of the Afghan rulers. A close and careful study of the history of medieval Kashmir, however, reveals that persecution of non-Muslims by these zealots was resented by the majority of their Muslim subjects, who used to give shelter and solace to their compatriots in trouble. The people were conscious of the fact that this policy was born of political exigencies of these rulers who were experiencing difficulties in their career, and it did not reflect their

respect for, or devotion to, the faith they professed. That the various religious communities bore no ill-will to one another, is proved by the political unrest in Kashmir during the fifteenth century when all the people, Hindu and Muslim, combined to give a fight to the Sayyids who had come from Iran and Turan and established their settlements in the Valley. Likewise the cruelties perpetrated by the Afghan rulers on Hindus to forcibly convert them to Islam, did not win them the sympathy or support of the Muslims of the Valley ; instead they joined the Hindus in extending an invitation to Ranjit Singh to invade Kashmir and rid them of the tyrannical rule of the Afghans. Religious fanaticism and persecution of communities professing a creed other than the religion of the king, seems to have been the general trend in medieval times : witness, for example, the wholesale extirpation of Sayyids from Persia by Timur, the suppression of Sufis and Nurbakhshis in Kashmir by Mirza Haider Dughlat, and the constant feuds in Afghanistan between the Shia and Sunni sects. That the masses in Kashmir did not fall victim to this malady of the times is apparent from the tolerant reigns of Sultans like Qutb-ud-din, Zain-ul-abidin, and Hussain Shah Chak.

Kashmir was the meeting place of two mighty traditions—the heart of India's monistic Wisdom-Religion, which was Kashmir Saivism, and *Erfan*, the "Wisdom of the Quran." The geographical situation of the Valley, the rich cultural heritage of its people and the radical nature of Islam that came to Kashmir, were all responsible for this unique development. In what manner the two religions acted and reacted on one another is an interesting study.

### HINDUISM

As mentioned earlier the Hindu religion and society before the advent of Islam, had been affected by Buddhism. If Kashmir Saivism was responsible for the development of Mahayana, Hinduism was no less influenced by the heterodox dogma of Buddhism and its denunciation of caste. The social fabric was thus loosened and many undesirable practices, like those of *Devadasi* and *Sati*, became common. The religious beliefs were petrified into rigid Saiva rites and rituals conducted under the supervision of Brahmans. The latter's influence through their *Parishads* or Societies was being increasingly felt not only in religion but also in the policies of the State. Devaswamin the head of the Saiva sect, for instance, refused to admit Rinchin to the Hindu fold.

The Saiva cult became the predominant religion of the people and replaced the Vedic rites and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death of a Hindu. All the religious and philosophical books were in



Sanskrit which, with the emergence of the popular Kashmiri language, became the domain of the privileged few, mostly of the Brahman caste. Since the latter also carried on the civil administration, there grew up slowly a stiff though silent opposition to this class among the general mass of the people. This was reflected in the bid for gaining popular support through the persecution of the Kayasthas and Brahmans by several Hindu kings.

No wonder the teachings of Islam as carried to Kashmir by the Sufis found a ready response from the general populace. By the time Shah Mir ascended the throne, there seems to have been a fairly strong Muslim community in Kashmir, and by the end of the fourteenth century the "adoption of Islam by the great mass of the population became an accomplished fact."<sup>1</sup>

But the Brahmans did not actively oppose the expansion of Muslim influence in the Valley, since "the administration remained as before in the hands of the traditional official class, the Brahmans, for whom a change of religion presented no advantage and who accordingly retained their inherited status, together with its literary traditions."<sup>2</sup>

With the growing influence of the Iranian and Turanian Sayyids at the Kashmir Court, and the consequent encouragement of Persian language by the Sultans, the Brahmans were faced with the prospect of losing their privileged position. But with their quick adaptability they switched over to the study of the Persian language and literature in which they soon outshone the Sayyids. They had, however, to suffer persecution at the hands of Sultans Sikandar and Ali Shah who adopted this policy at the bidding of the Sayyid nobles. Most of the temples were destroyed by Suha Bhatt the newly converted minister of Sikandar and he, "with the leaders of the army, tried to destroy the caste of the people."<sup>3</sup> The Brahmans resisted forcible conversion by death, by flight to places in the rest of India, more particularly to the South. "The difficult country through which they passed", laments Srivara, "the scanty food, painful illness, and the torments of hell during lifetime, removed from the minds of the Brahmans the fear of hell. Oppressed by various calamities such as encounter with the enemy, fear of snakes, fierce heat and scanty food, many Brahmans perished on the way, and thus obtained relief."<sup>4</sup> Those, however, who could not leave the Valley "wandered about in Kashmira wearing

1 Stein, Trans. of *Rajatarangini* Vol. 1. p. 130.

2 *Ibid.*

3 Jonar., p. 60.

4 *Srivara*, p. 67.

the dress of the malechas," Mir Ali Hamadani, the great Sufi Sayyid would not, however, look with equanimity on this show of brute force against the Brahmans and advised Sultan Sikandar to desist from this un-Islamic practice. The Brahmans were allowed to pursue their religion and occupation on payment of poll-tax or Jazya.

Under Zain-ul-abidin's tolerant rule the Brahmans regained their power and prestige and occupied positions of trust and responsibility in his government. They took an active part in reviving the literary traditions of the land and enriching it with the influences from Persian and Arabic science and literature.

The Mughal emperors treated the Brahmans of Kashmir with great respect and with the opening up of the Valley, they found a wider field for their talent. Many Kashmiri Brahmans rose to high political posts, as for instance Pandit Mahadeo and Chaudhri Mahesh in Kashmir and Jai Ram Bhan at Delhi. The Brahmans were no doubt victims of religious persecution during the time of some Mughal governors, Itqad Khan for instance, but by and large they had a peaceful time throughout the Mughal period.

The Afghan rule was particularly harsh on them, but with their literary and political acumen, they produced several eminent administrators who won the confidence of even the most tyrannous of governors. For instance Dila Ram Quli was the chief minister of both Haji Karim Dad Khan and his son, Azad Khan, and "possessed a more liberal disposition than is usually found in an Indian ..... His deportment seemed uniformly benevolent to all classes of people. With his companions he was affable and good humoured. He was humane to his domestics and exercised with a reasonable temperance the duties of his office."<sup>1</sup>

All this shows that though the Brahmans had to face very rough times, they weathered the storm with their courage and faith. But this was made possible by the affection and solace they received from the general mass of the population who were Muslims. We have it on the authority of a Brahman historian that many Muslims gave shelter to a large number of Hindus and kept them concealed in their houses till the dawn of better days.<sup>2</sup>

The most potent reason, however, for their survival as a distinct community was the emergence of a reformist movement in Hinduism itself and their wholesale subscription to its tenets and spirit.

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1 Forster, *Travels*.

2 Anand Ram Pahalwan, *History of Kashmir* (Persian).

## LALLESHWARI—FORERUNNER OF MEDIEVAL REFORMERS

As in the rest of India, the middle of the 14th century was a period of religious and moral ferment in Kashmir. Buddhism had practically disappeared from the Valley, though we find mention of Buddhist priests and *viharas* in the later *Rajataranginis*.<sup>1</sup> Tilakacarya, discribed as a Buddhist, was a minister of Zain-ul-abidin.<sup>2</sup> Most of the Buddhist theologians and saints finding the Valley uncongenial, had left for Ladakh and Tibet. The long period of political instability which followed the peaceful and enlightened reign of Avantivarman (855-83 A.D.) was responsible for the ossification of the predominant religion, Saivism, into elaborate and complicated rituals which dominated all social and cultural activities. Shaktism, born of the love for Durga worship, had degenerated into grotesque forms of rites and ceremonies. Vaishnavism was not a strong element in the religious fabric of the Valley, but in the 11th century it received further nourishment from the teachings of Ramanuja who travelled all the way from Madras to Kashmir to fight Saivism at its fountain-head. And with the destruction of temples and images by several Hindu kings like Harsa, as well as by Muslim zealots, Hindu worship was driven to the seclusion of the home or of 'natural' (*Svayambu*) images—rocks, or ice formations, or springs. Sanskrit became the domain of the learned few, the common man having taken to a form of Prakrit which though retaining its essentials, was yet wholly different from the "Language of the Gods."

In this troubled period of political uncertainty and changing social values, the people of the Valley were subjected to the impact of Islam. From a close contact between the two religions and their deep influence on each other, there resulted the evolution of what may be called Medieval Reformers or Mystics.

For more than two hundred years Islam had, in Central Asia and Persia, been similarly influenced by the teachings and dogmas of Mahayana Buddhism and Upanishadic philosophy, resulting in the emergence of a cult of Islamic mystics. Fortunately the new religion entered the Valley in this form, being carried there by enlightened Sufis like Bulbul Shah. With their humanistic approach to religion, they found a ready and sympathetic response from the Kashmiris, already permeated with the teachings of mystic saints and "seers."

For, it was during this period of religious ferment that a need had been felt for a new approach to religion embracing all creeds and castes and appealing to the 'heart' rather than the 'head'. Thanks to its rich

1 Srivara, p. 202, 284.

2 Jonaraja, p. 83.



religious and philosophic traditions, Kashmir rose to the occasion and produced a number of mystics and saints who by their teachings and their lives of complete self-abnegation were the living embodiments of true religion and morality.

Foremost among them was the great mystic "seer", Lalleshwari, popularly known as Lall Ded (Mother Lalla), who profoundly influenced the thought and life of her contemporaries and whose Sayings still touch the Kashmiri's ear, as well as the chords of his heart, and are freely quoted by him as maxims on appropriate occasions. She was born in about the middle of the 14th century of the Christian era in the time of Sultan Alau-ud-din. Lalla's parents lived at Pandrenthan (ancient Puranadhisthana) some four and a half miles to the south-east of Srinagar. She was married at an early age, but was cruelly treated by her mother-in-law who nearly starved her. This story is preserved in a Kashmiri proverb : *Whether they killed a big sheep or a small one, Lalla had always a stone for her dinner*—an allusion to her mother-in-law's practice of putting a lumpy stone on her platter and covering it thinly with rice, to make it look quite a big heap to others. And yet she never murmured.

Her father-in-law accidentally found out the truth. He got annoyed with his wife and scolded her. This incident invited more curses on Lalla. Her mother-in-law poisoned the ears of her son against his wife with all sorts of stories. Ultimately, the anomalies and cruelties of wordly life led her to renunciation and she discovered liberty and equality in the life of the spirit.

She found her guru in Sidh Srikanth, whom she ultimately excelled in spiritual attainments :

*Gav Tsatha guras khasithay,*  
*Tyuth var ditam Diva*  
 The disciple surpassed the Guru ;  
 O God, grant me a similar boon.

She pursued *Yoga* under Sidh Srikanth until she succeeded in reaching the 'abode of nectar'. But she did not stop there. All around her was conflict and chaos. Her countrymen and women needed her guidance. She had a mission to perform, and well and effectively she did it. Her life and Sayings were mainly responsible in moulding the character of her people and setting up the tradition of love and tolerance which characterises them even today.

Eventually she gave up her secluded life and became a wandering preacher. She led a severely ascetic life, clad in the bareness of one who had forsaken comforts, and by example and precept conveyed her

teachings to the masses. Like Mira she sang of Siva, the great beloved and thousands of her followers, Hindu as well as Muslim, committed to memory her famous *Vakyas*.

There is a high moral teaching which Lalla demonstrated when during her nude state a gang of youthful rowdies were mocking her. A sober-minded cloth vendor intervened and chastised them. On this she asked the vendor for two pieces of ordinary cloth, equal in weight. She put them on either shoulder and continued her wanderings. On the way some had salutations for her and some had gibes. For every such greeting she had a knot in the cloth, for the salutation in the piece on the right, and for the gibes in the piece on the left. In the evening after her round, she returned the pieces to the vendor and had them weighed. Neither had, of course, gained or lost by the knots. She thus brought home to the vendor, and her disciples, that mental equipoise should not be shaken by the manner people greeted or treated a person.

So that her teachings and spiritual experiences might reach the masses, she propagated them in their own language. She thus laid the foundations of the rich Kashmiri literature and folklore. More than thirty percent of the Kashmiri idioms and proverbs derive their origin from her *Vakyas*.

These *Vakyas* or Sayings are an aggregate of *Yoga* philosophy and Saivism, expressive of high thought and spiritual truth, precise, apt and sweet. Her quatrains are now rather difficult to understand as the language has undergone so many changes, and references to special *Yogic* and philosophic terms are numerous therein.

Some of these Sayings have been collected and published by Dr. Grierson, Dr. Barnett, Sir Richard Temple and Pandit Anand Koul. Apart from the consideration that they explain the Saiva philosophy of Kashmir through the Kashmiri dialect, her Sayings exemplify the synthesis of cultures for which Kashmir has always been noted.

Lalla fills her teachings with many truths that are common to all religious philosophy. There are in it many touches of Vaishnavism, the great rival of Saivism, much that is strongly reminiscent of the doctrines and methods of the Muhammadan Sufis who were in India and Kashmir well before her day, and teachings that might be Christian with Biblical analogies, though Indians' knowledge of Christianity must have been very remote and indirect at her date.

Lalla is no believer in good work in this or in former lives, in pilgrimages or austerities. In one of her Sayings she criticises the cold and meaningless way in which religious rituals are performed :

God does not want meditations and austerities,  
 Through love alone canst thou reach the Abode of Bliss.  
 Thou mayst be lost like salt in water,  
 Still it is difficult for thee to know God.

All labour, to be effective, must be undertaken without thought of profit and dedicated to Him. Exhorting her followers to stick fast to ideals of love and service to humanity, paying no thought to the praise or condemnation that might follow from their observance, she says :

Let them jeer or cheer me ;  
 Let anybody say what he likes ;  
 Let good persons worship me with flowers ;  
 What can any one of them gain, I being pure ?  
 If the world talks ill of me,  
 My heart shall harbour no ill-will ;  
 If I am a true worshipper of God,  
 Can ashes leave a stain on a mirror ?

She is a strong critic of idolatry as a useless and even silly "work" and adjures the worshipper of stocks and stones to turn to *Yogic* doctrines and exercises for salvation :

Idol is of stone, temple is of stone ;  
 Above (temple) and below (idol) are one ;  
 Which of them wilt thou worship, O foolish Pandit ?  
 Cause thou the union of mind with Soul.

She further castigates the fanatical followers of the so-called "religions" in the following apt Saying :

O Mind, why hast thou become intoxicated at another's expense ?  
 Why hast thou mistaken true for untrue ?  
 Thy little understanding hath made thee attached to other's  
 religion ;  
 Subdued to coming and going ; to birth and death.

But Lalla is not a bigot ; she constantly preaches wide and even eclectic doctrines ; witness the following and many other instances : "It matters nothing by what name the Supreme is called, He is still the Supreme ;" "Be all things to all men ;" "the true saint is the servant of all mankind through his humility and loving kindness ;" "It matters nothing what a man is or what his work of gaining his livelihood may be, so long as he sees the Supreme properly."

She puts no value on anything done without the saving belief in *Yogic* doctrine and practice, one of the results of which is the destruction of the fruits of all work, good or bad. The aspirant should try to



attain perfection in this life. He only requires faith and perseverance :

Siva is with a fine net spread,  
He permeath the mortal coils.

If thou, whilst living, canst not see Him, how canst thou when  
dead.

Take out Self from Self, after pondering over it.

She is a firm believer in herself : says she has become famous and talks of the "wine of her Sayings" as something obviously precious, and alludes often to her own mode of life, fully believing she has obtained Release :

I saw and found I am in everything,  
I saw God effulgent in everything.  
After hearing and pausing, see Siva,  
The House is His alone ; Who am I, Lalla.

The removal of confusion caused among the masses by the preachings of zealots was the most important object of her mission. Having realised the Absolute Truth, all religions were to her merely paths leading to the same goal :

*Shiv chuy thali thali rozan ;*  
*Mo zan Hindu ta Musalman.*  
*Truk ay chuk pan panun parzanav,*  
*Soy chay Sahibas sati zaniy zan.*  
Siva pervades every place and thing ;  
Do not differentiate between Hindu and Musalman.  
If thou art intelligent, recognise thine own self ;  
That is the true acquaintance with God.

The greatness of Lalla lies in giving the essence of her experiences in the course of her *Yoga* practices through the language of the common man. She has shown very clearly the evolution of the human being, the theory of *nada*, the worries of a *jiva* and the way to keep them off. The different stages of *Yoga* with the awakening of the *kundalini* and the experiences at the six plexi have been elucidated by her.

Much can indeed be said on her work as a poet and more, perhaps, on her work in the spiritual realm. But at a time when the world was suffering from conflict—social, political and economic—her efforts in removing the difference between man and man need to be emphasised. The composite culture and thought she preached and the Order she founded was an admixture of the non-dualistic philosophy of Saivism and Islamic Sufism. As long back as the 15th century she

preached non-violence, simple living and high thinking and became thus Lalla Arifa for Muhammadans and Lalleshwari for Hindus.

She was thus the first among the long list of saints who preached medieval mysticism which later embraced the whole of India. It must be remembered that Ramananda's teaching and that of those who came after him could not have affected Lalla, because Ramananda flourished between 1400 and 1470, while Kabir sang his famous *Dohas* between 1440 and 1518, and Guru Nanak between 1469 and 1538. Tulsidasa did not come on the scene till 1532 and 1623, whereas Mira flourished much later.

#### LATER MYSTICS

The traditions set up by Lalla were kept alive by numerous mystic saints, both Hindu and Muslim, in the centuries following her death. In the seventeenth century, during the reign of Aurangzeb, there flourished two whose memory is still cherished by the general populace and still commands reverence from a large number of Kashmiri Brahmans.

The first is the famous hermitess, Rupa Bhawani *alias* Alakeshwari ('the lady of the lock of hair') so called because she used to leave the hair loose and undone, or Alak-Ishwari (incarnation of the Invisible). She was born in 1625 A.D. Her father, Pandit Madhav Dhar, a saintly person, lived in Srinagar. He used to have philosophical discussions with a Muslim Faqir, Sayyid Kamal *alias* Thag Baba, who lived just near his house across the river.

Like Lalleshwari, Rupa Bhawani also married at a young age, and like her again she had to suffer hardships and cruelties at the hands of her mother-in-law. She too had to give up the world and live an ascetic's life. Her spiritual preceptor was her father who initiated her into the mysteries of *Yoga*. While living as an ascetic at a village near Srinagar, she came in contact with a Muhammadan mystic, Shah Sadiq Qalandar, with whom she used to have long philosophical discussions.

Her verses and sayings composed in the Kashmiri language of her times, have a profound mystic significance. They reveal the influence of both Kashmir Saivism and Islamic Sufism : some explaining her spiritual experiences and teachings of *Yoga*. According to her, non-attachment and dissolution of 'self' or ego (*fana* of the Sufis) are the essentials of Realisation :

Selflessness is the sign of the Selfless ;

Bow down at the door of the Selfless.

The selfless are of the highest authority—

The kings of the time and the wearers of the crest and crown.

Allowing a glimpse into her own spiritual experiences, she says :

I dashed down into the nether regions (of the body) and brought  
the vital breath up ;

I got its clue out of earth and stones ;

Then my *Kundalini* woke up with *nada* (loud noise); I drank wine  
by the mouth.

I got the vital breath (and) gathered it within myself.

Rupa Bhawani introduced a very important social reform, which is still respected and strictly followed. She tabooed bigamy and polygamy in the family of her father, the Dhars. This reform has greater force and higher sanction than a statutory law, and has now nearly become universal among the Hindus of Kashmir.

Rupa Bhawani passed away at a ripe old age of 96 years in the year 1721 A.D. Shah Sadiq Qalandar<sup>1</sup> recorded the year in a Persian chronogram, meaning,

That holy-natured incarnation of the Unseen

Broke her coil of four elements (*i.e.* quitted her body) ;

Flew to the highest heaven ;

With a good-natured heart united with Bliss.

While Aurangzeb was enforcing his puritanism and orthodoxy at his court, Sufism and mysticism were still being preached among the general populace by mystics like Sarmad in Delhi and Rishi Pir in Kashmir. Born in 1637 A.D. of a family of orthodox Brahmans, Rishi Pir had a religious turn of mind from his very childhood. He found a "spiritual guide" in a famous hermit, Pandit Krishna Kar.

Rishi Pir on account of his saintly nature soon became famous and was revered by all classes of people. He had long sessions of discussions and discourses with Akhund Mullah Shah, the learned tutor of Dara Shikoh who had built his monastery on the southern slope of the Hari Parbat hill.

Rishi Pir was called by his followers "*Padshah har du jehan*" the "Emperor of two Worlds". This, together with Rishi Pir's association

1 It was he who wrote the following fine lines in Persian, suggestive of the transitoriness of the world :

*Yak chand sawarah sair-i-dashte kardem ;*

*Yak chand pyadah pasht pashte kardem.*

*Didem ki in kucha nadarad payan ;*

*Gashte kardem o baz gashte kardem.*

At one time I made excursions over a plain, riding ;

At another time I walked round a plateau.

I found this lane (*i.e.* life) had no end ;

I strolled on and on and then strolled back.



with Dara Shikoh's tutor, alarmed Aurangzeb, particularly when he had to face revolts raised by religious leaders in different parts of the country. He therefore sent orders to his governor, Saif Khan, to put him under arrest.

Whereas the Hindus claim that he appeared in a dream to Aurangzeb the same night demanding the annulment of the imperial order, the Muslim version is that some of his ministers assured the emperor that Rishi Pir had no political axe to grind but was simply a holy man to whom worldly power was repugnant. Howsoever it may be, the emperor cancelled his orders and thenceforth Rishi Pir carried on his religious mission peacefully.

Aurangzeb seems to have been struck with remorse at his cruel action in condemning Sarmad, the famous Sufi of his time, to the gallows. When in 1665 he visited Kashmir, Rishi Pir comforted him by his assurance that exalted souls like that of Sarmad did neither care for death, nor bear any sense of grievance against those who harmed them.

Many miracles are attributed to Rishi Pir. But this was sharply criticised by his contemporary, Rupa Bhawani, who viewed them with disfavour as tending to show personal and worldly aggrandizement. Rishi Pir was humbled and desisted thenceforth from indulging in this cheap way of winning popular applause. He died at the age of sixty in the year 1697. His son also turned a recluse and was affectionately known among the people as Rah nawab.

During the Afghan rule too, Kashmir had a number of Muslim and Hindu saints, who with their comforting words and sometimes even by their active intercession with the governors on behalf of the people reduced the pitch of fury of many an unscrupulous ruler. Jiwan Sahib, for instance, cast a spell of devotion on the hard-hearted tyrant, Azad Khan. The latter had superstitious awe of the *faqir*, who many a time admonished him not to indulge in wanton cruelty. Jiwan Sahib lived at Rainawari, the eastern suburb of Srinagar, and led a life of austere meditation and penance. Thousands of people used to flock to him for solace and listen attentively to his discourses, the burden of which was simple living and high thinking.

#### INFLUENCE OF ISLAM ON HINDUISM AND VICE VERSA

We have now a fair picture of the deep influence that Islam had on orthodox Hinduism. Long before Kashmir had a Muslim ruler the new religion had penetrated into the Valley, its missionaries having effected the conversion of most of the lower castes. The denunciation

of idolatory and caste system by Islam was no doubt a major factor in making an accomplished king like Harsa to spoliage temples and desecrate the images. Hindus, particularly of lower castes, also seem to have discarded many of the rigid rituals and practices preached by orthodox Brahmans. Bemoans Jonaraja : "As the wind destroys the trees and the locusts the *shali* crop, so did the Yavanas destroy the usages of Kashmira."<sup>1</sup> And again, "the kingdom of Kashmira was polluted by the evil practices of the malechas."<sup>2</sup> Srivara, the historian who followed him, speaks in the same strain. He complains that many of the misfortunes of Kashmir were due to the changes in customs and manners of the people.<sup>3</sup> In course of time, the lower castes gave up the performance of prescribed ceremonies, and accepted Islam.

Even the Brahmans, who retained the Hindu religion and caste, could not escape the influence of the new religion. A majority of them, in order to retain the government jobs, took to the study of Persian which in a few centuries became so popular with the Pandit class that they composed hymns and prayers to their deities in the Persian language rather than in Sanskrit. There were changes in dress and manners. We have already traced the influence of Islamic teachings on Advaita Saivism and the evolution of the Hindu Medieval Reformers. Lalla, for instance, was critical of the caste system and idol worship.

But if Islam was responsible in effecting profound changes in the Hindu rites, rituals, and belief in caste and idol worship, it could not escape a transformation in several of its own beliefs and practices. The new converts could not make a complete break with the past, and continued to follow some of their old rites and rituals. Even though Islam, for instance, denounced the caste system, they carried on with their old caste rites in marriage and other social customs. They also continued to celebrate their festivals of *Gana-cakra*, *Caitra*, *Vyathtruwah*, *Sri Pancami*. Many of them did not totally give up idol worship and continued to have reverence for their old places of worship and pilgrimage.

This had also a profound effect on the rulers, particularly the Sultans, who in deference to the wishes of the people, adopted some of the practices of their former religion. Most of these Sultans had Hindu wives who, though converted to Islam, could not fail to influence their husbands and children with their former religious beliefs. It is, therefore, no wonder that some Sultans had faith in the efficacy of *havans* or sacrificial ceremonies of the Hindus; in visiting Hindu *tirthas*,

1 Jonar., p. 57.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 59.

3 *Sriv.*, 235, 319

and in allowing Brahman priests to officiate at several functions, *e.g.* at the time of coronation, or birth of the heir-apparent.

The Islamic Rishis of Kashmir had been greatly influenced by the Hindu religion. Like the Hindu Rishis or recluses, they believed in withdrawing from the world, practising celibacy, undergoing penances in caves and jungles, refraining from killing birds and animals for food or eating even freshly picked vegetables and fruits. They lived on wild vegetables and endeavoured to follow the *Yogic* practices of the Hindus.

"Popular Islam in Kashmir thus became diluted with foreign elements, and this character it has retained until today."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Hassan, *Kashmir under the Sultans*, p. 241.



## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### ART AND LETTERS

As in religion and philosophy, so too in art and literature, medieval Kashmir is noteworthy for the emergence of a composite culture, result no doubt of the deep Islamic influences from Persia and Central Asia. The large number of Sayyid nobles, theologians, artists and litterateurs who entered Kashmir during the reigns of Sultans Sikandar and Zain-ul-abidin, and were welcomed and patronized by them, revolutionised the existing pattern of art and literature. But the ancient culture of Kashmir did not perish before the onslaughts of the new faith and language. There was, no doubt, persecution under the rule of some of the Sultans and Mughal and Afghan governors, but by and large the kings professing Islam were reasonably tolerant and they encouraged the study of Indian literature and science.

#### SANSKRIT

This is particularly true of Sanskrit which "remained for a considerable period after the end of Hindu rule the medium of official communication and record."<sup>1</sup> It is amply shown by the *Lokaprakasa*, a compendium of official documents, reports, etc. This remarkable handbook of Kashmiran administrative routine is drawn up in a curious "Sanskrit jargon full of Persian and Arabic words which must have become current after the introduction of Islam." It clearly shows the transition from Sanskrit to Persian, adopted later as the official language of administration.

The continued popular use of Sanskrit even among Muhammadans is strikingly proved by the Sanskrit inscriptions on a few tombs in the cemetery of Baha-ud-din Sahib at the foot of the Hari Parbat hill in Srinagar. One of the tombs bears a date corresponding to 1484 A.D. and was put up in the reign of Sultan Muhammad Shah. Stein found Sanskrit inscriptions on a number of old Muhammadan tombs at Srinagar, near Martand, and elsewhere.<sup>2</sup>

The creative period in Sanskrit literature, however, had long

<sup>1</sup> Stein, Trans of the *Rajatarangini* Vol. I, p. 130.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

before this come to an end, there being little of intrinsic merit, though we find some significant contributions in historical literature, devotional poetry and Saivism. Whereas previously Kashmir was the "high school" of Sanskrit learning, it receded into the background during the medieval period. There is no originality : works seem to have been produced only for the learned ; and there is no contact with the masses.

We owe the knowledge of the history of the times to four Sanskrit Chroniclers, namely, Jonaraja, Srivara, Prajyabhatta and Suka. Jonaraja (d. 1459) brought Kalhana's narrative of the kings of Kashmir down to the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. The greater portion of his *Dvitiya-Rajatarangini* deals with the reigns of the later Hindu rulers from Jayasimha to queen Kota. Jonaraja was a scholar of considerable attainments. He is the author of an exhaustive commentary on Mankha's *Srikanthacarita*.

Srivara the author of *Jaina-Rajatarangini* was the pupil of Jonaraja and in four Books deals with the period 1459-86 A.D. The gradual decline in Sanskrit learning in Kashmir which suffered during "the period of troubles and oppression which lasted with short interruptions of two and a half centuries previous to Akbar's conquest", is reflected in the character and contents of these later Chronicles. Srivara who besides being an eminent musician, was well-versed in Persian and Arabic languages also, wrote *Kathakautuka*, an adaptation in fifteen cantos of Jami's *Yusuf-wa-Zuleikha* which is of peculiar interest, in as much as it is probably the earliest instance of the utilization of Persian literature. Hebrew in origin, the story glorifies Muhammad Shah of Kashmir and is written in easy Sanskrit poetry. "The romantic Persian love-lyric has been amalgamated with the Indian Saiva faith, the last canto being entirely dedicated to the praise of Siva."<sup>1</sup> Srivara, besides writing his historical works, also compiled his *Subhasitavali* containing extracts from the works of more than 380 poets, both from Kashmir and the rest of India.

Prajyabhatta's composition, *Rajavali-pataka*, ended with the year 1513-14 A.D. and the reign of Fateh Shah. The narrative was completed by his pupil Suka, who brought the history of Kashmir down to the annexation of the kingdom by Akbar (1586).

A remarkable contribution to Sanskrit devotional poetry is Jagadhar Bhatt's *Stuti-Kusmanjali* written in 1450. It consists of thirty-eight hymns in praise of Siva.

Among other important works of the period mention must be made of Jagadhar Bhatt's *Balabodini*, a work on the Katantra school

1 *The Delhi Sultanate*, p. 466.

of grammar, written in 1475 A.D. Varadaraja's *Sivasutra-vartika*, composed in the fifteenth century, is a commentary on *Siva-Sutra*. Another important author and commentator of books on Kashmir Saivism was Shivopadhyaya who lived in Srinagar in about 1757 A.D. Sahib Kaul, a learned scholar of the seventeenth century, wrote books on Tantric worship.

A prolific writer in Sanskrit of the seventeenth century was Rajanaka Ratnakantha, son of Sankarakantha. He is the author of several commentaries on Kashmirian *Kavyas* and also of some original poetical compositions. His *Laghupacinka* is a commentary on Ratnakara's *Haravijayakavya*; *Sisyahita* on the *Yudhisthiravijayakavya* of Vasudeva; *Laghupancika* on Jagadhar Bhatt's *Stuti-Kusmanjali*. The *Ratnasataka* is century of verses in praise of Surya and *Suryastutirahasya*, is a small devotional poem. Ratnakantha is also credited with the authorship of *Sarasamuccaya*, a commentary on the *Kavyaprakasa*, containing a resume of Jayanti and other earlier expositions. Ratnakantha was also a fast copyist and the *Codex Archetypus* of Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* is in his hand.

Sanskrit lost its privileged position not because the Persian language received patronage from the Muslim rulers, but because it had ceased to be the language of the common man who had taken to a vernacular evolved through several centuries. The medieval period in Kashmir thus presents a composite picture of the development of the Kashmirian language among the common people and cultivation of Persian by the learned. Before we take up the consideration of the progress of the new vernacular, it will be profitable to have a bird's-eye view of the proficiency that the Kashmiri scholars and poets attained in Persian which replaced Sanskrit as the language of the court and medium of government communication and record.

## PERSIAN

Persian language was not new to Kashmiri scholars of the later Hindu period. With the establishment of Muslim rule in north-west India towards the middle of the eleventh century, Persian words entered into Sanskrit vocabulary as the official designations like *dibir* or *divira* (after the Persian *dabir*) and *ganjavara* (after the Persian *ganjwar*) would show. Besides, Kashmir seems to have had cultural relations with Persia from ancient times. The terra-cotta tiles unearthed at Harwan which date back to the fourth century A.D. depict Sassanian characteristics. These influences did not, however, dominate till the introduction of Islam during the middle of the fourteenth century. The



pace of Perso-Islamic influence in the Valley was accelerated with the immigration of Sayyid nobles and scholars from Persia and Central Asia. Persian began to be studied in right earnest by the Kashmiri scholars in the colleges and educational institutions founded by the rulers and nobles and presided over by eminent scholars from Persia. Often ardent scholars went to the universities at Bukhara, Samarkand Herat and Merv, to drink deep from the fountains of Persian and Islamic culture.

With the increasing patronage extended to Persian scholarship by the Sultans, Sanskrit receded to the background and Kashmiri students switched over to the study of Persian, which became the language of educated classes and even found its way into the villages. The process was completed with the replacement of Sanskrit by Persian as the court language of Kashmir during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. Thenceforth, Kashmir produced poets and writers in Persian whose beauty of style and depth of thought equalled that of the litterateurs of Persia. If that country is proud of its Firdausi, Hafiz, Rumi and Nizami, Kashmir is equally proud of its Sarfi, Ghani, Dairi and Hubbi. Hafiz was not indulging in poetic imagination when he sang ;

The black-eyed beauties of Kashmir and the Turks of Samarqand,  
Sing and dance to the strains of Hafiz of Shiraz's verse.

The Sultan who was himself a poet and the author of two prose works in Persian, made a great contribution to the spread of Persian in Kashmir. Not only did he appreciate and reward original works, but he set up a translation bureau to render some of the famous Sanskrit works into Persian. Most of the literature in Persian produced during the reign of Zain-ul-abidin has perished, but from the small fragments which are still available, it can be deduced that Persian had attained a high standard of development in his time.

It was during this reign that the Brahmans of Kashmir, the traditional community of Sanskrit scholarship, took a far-reaching decision of learning Persian under the compelling circumstances of earning their living and maintaining their privileged position as government officials. There was naturally resistance to this move from the more conservative members of the community who stuck fast to the study of Sanskrit and observance of traditional customs and ceremonies. This class came to be known as Bhashyabhatts whereas the more liberal class who took to the study of Persian were known as Karkuns.

We thus find both Hindus and Muhammadans of Kashmir making a sizeable contribution to Persian literature. Under Zain-ul-abidin's patronage, Mulla Ahmed completed a Persian translation of Kalhana's

*Rajatarangini*, known as *Bahr-ul-Asmar*. Though this translation is not extant now, it is presumed to have been the original source-book for later histories of Kashmir written in Persian. Srivara was, as noted above, a Sanskrit and Persian scholar and adopted the style and metre of Jami's *Yusuf-wa-Zuleikha* in writing his *Kathakautuka*. Yodhabhatta, another courtier, had mastered the whole of *Shah-nama* which he recited to the delight of the Sultan.

We find a similar patronage being extended to Persian under the successors of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin. Hassan Shah, though not a poet himself, was a man of culture and patronized poets and learned men. His mother, Gul Khatun, built a college and founded a school for the study of medicine. Similarly, Hussain Shah Chak sought the company of the learned. Himself a poet, he encouraged the study of Persian and patronized poets and litterateurs. Yusuf Shah Chak was perhaps the most learned of the Chak rulers and fond of music and dancing. Muhammad Amin Mustaghni, a Kashmiri poet, was one of his courtiers.

But the two outstanding poets and scholars of the later Chak rule were Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki.

#### SHEIKH YAQUB SARFI

Scholar, mystic, statesman and traveller, Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi made an appreciable contribution to the Arabic and Persian literatures. His poetical diction, especially the *mathnawi* and *ghazal*, ranks him with Nizami and Jami. He was widely respected by top-ranking Indian statesmen and men of letters of his time, and wielded enormous influence on the people of Kashmir on account of his eminent scholarship and political foresight.

According to Mulla Abdul Wahab Nuri, the author of *Fathat-i-Kubrawiyah*, an invaluable treatise on Sufism, the Sheikh was born in 1521. He claimed descent from the second Caliph of Islam (Omar) and called himself "Asimi" after one of the sons of the Caliph.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi received his education partly from his father, Sheikh Hassan Ganai, and partly from Mulla Muhammad Aani, Mulla Razi and Hafiz Bashir of Khandabhawan in Srinagar. Aani was the direct disciple of the celebrated poet-philosopher, Nur-ud-din Abdur Rehman Jami (15th century), from whom he had received his education in his early youth at the city of Herat (Afghanistan). The Sheikh was quick in grasping the intricate and difficult rules of Arabic grammar and won the surname of 'Sarfi' (the grammarian) from his tutor.

After the completion of his education, which meant in those days

the study of Arabic Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic, Philosophy, History, Arabic and Persian Literature, Islamic Jurisprudence, Tradition and the Quranic Commentary, the Sheikh was anxious to adopt a spiritual guide for himself. He was told that Sheikh Hussain of Khwarazm (Khiva, in Russian Turkestan) would be the most suitable guide for him. He, therefore, set out for Khwarazm, and on his way, came into contact with famous saints and learned men of his time. After his return from Khwarazm he was held by all to be an accomplished scholar.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi travelled extensively. He visited various cities in India. His admiration for Hindustan and her cities may be gauged from the fact that there is a lyric in his Persian *Dewan* devoted wholly to the praise and virtues of Ahmedabad and its people.

He came in close contact with literary figures in India and developed a great intimacy with Faizi, the elder brother of Abul Fazal, the celebrated statesman and prime minister of Akbar. He was also on good terms with Mulla Abdul Qadir of Badayun, the celebrated author of the *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh*. There is a letter in the *Muntakhab-ul-Tawarikh* addressed to the Sheikh, wherein the Mulla hails him as a great scholar and praises his talents as well as his piety. It is claimed by Maulvi Mohammad Hussain Azad (*Durbar-i-Akbari*, page 71) that he supported the idea of making obeisance to the emperor. While Sarfi was in India, Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi (the well-known Mujjadid Alf-i-Sani) used to receive instruction from him in Hadis and Sufism.

About this time nearly the whole of Hindustan was coming under the hegemony of the Mughal Empire. Indian art and literature were finding new channels of expression under the tolerant administration of Akbar. Sheikh Sarfi, who during his extensive travels in India and abroad had witnessed this cultural renaissance, became convinced that the time had come for Kashmir to give up its temporary isolation and regain in close association with India her former position as a leading centre of Indian learning and art.

His convictions were further strengthened by the unfortunate political and religious dissensions prevailing among the various communities in Kashmir, with consequent evil effects on the economic condition of the common man. The Sheikh was roused to indignation, and headed a deputation of leading men of Kashmir to the court of Akbar, urging him to annex the Kingdom.

According to Khwaja Mohammad Azam Didamari, Sheiko Yaqub Sarfi died in 1003 A.H. (1594 A.D.). He was mourned by the great personalities of his time and was buried near Zaina Kadal in Srinagar.

Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi besides being a poet is the author of several



books, dealing with Sufism, travel, Islamic Traditions and Quranic Commentary.

His versified treatise on Sufism, *Maslak-ul-Akhyar*, comparable to Nizami's *Makhzan-i-Asrar*, contains four thousand and fifty couplets. According to the Sheikh's own statement, the book was written in 1589. It is still in manuscript form. An anonymous and undated copy is preserved in the Research and Publications Department of Kashmir.

*Wamiq-u-Azra*, a Persian Mathnawi in imitation of Nizami's *Shirin Khusro*, deals with the romance and love of Wamiq and Azra, the two traditional lovers of Arabia. As the chronogram given at the end indicates, it was written in A.H. 993 (1585). A manuscript copy is preserved in the Research and Publications Department of Kashmir. *Maghariz-ul-Nabi*, in imitation of Nizami's *Sikandar-namah* deals with the life and battles of the Prophet. The author in the beginning devotes 200 couplets to his own life-story and his travels in other countries. According to Sarfi's own statement the book was written in A.H. 1000 (1591).

A Mathnawi in simple Persian, *Laila Majnoon*, is in imitation of Nizami and Jami's famous work of that name. According to the author's own statement, the date of its composition was 998 A. H. (1589).

The last of his "Five Treasures" *Muqamat-i-Murshad*, was written by the Sheikh on the life and miracles of his Pir (spiritual guide) Sheikh Hussain of Khwarazm. It consists of three thousand couplets. At the end there is some advice to his brother, Mir Mohammad "Asimi", in which he lays down the principles of a good and successful life. The book, according to the Sheikh's own assertion, was composed in 1000 A.H. (1591).

Another Mathnawi, *Dhikriyya*, deals with Tassawuf (Sufism) and is not included in the "Five Treasures."

*Sharh Thulathoyyat*, a book on Tradition is a commentary on Imam Bukhari's book of that name. Another work on Islamic Tradition known as *Sharh Saheeh Bukhari*, is the annotation of the famous book *Saheeh Bukhari*.

*Manasik-ul-Haj* written by the Sheikh after he had performed the Haj pilgrimage deals with the rules and regulations of the holy pilgrimage.

*Tafseer-i-Matlab-ul-Talibeen* is a Quranic Commentary. It was seen and praised by the Sheikh's contemporary and friend, Mulla Abdul Qadir of Badayun. It was the last work undertaken by the Sheikh,

and he died before its completion. A rough copy is in the Research and Publications Department, Kashmir.

A collection of Sarfi's Persian lyrics, Ruba'is and Qasidas known as *Dewan-i-Sarfi* in three manuscript volumes is preserved in the Research and Publications Department of Kashmir.

A short treatise on Sufism, *Rawaih*, was composed in A. H. 976 (1568).

His other works include *Sharh Aarbi'in*, *Sharh Rubiyyat*, *Hashia Tauzeeh*, *Rasail-i-Mu'imma* and *Taqrizat*.

#### BABA DAUD KHAKI

A scion of the famous Ganai family of literary traditions, Baba Daud was born in 1521 A.D. His father, Sheikh Hassan Ganai, was a noted scribe. Baba Daud studied under Mulla Bashir and Allama Razi-ud-din. After completing his education, he served as a tutor of Nazuk Shah's son. But he soon gave up his service and became a disciple of Sheikh Hamza Makhdum. Being a learned Sufi and an accomplished poet, he was held in great respect by the people, and when Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi led a deputation to the court of Akbar to invite the emperor to annex Kashmir, Baba Daud Khaki was also one of its members. On his return from Akbar's court, he died at Anantnag in the year 1585.

Baba Daud Khaki wrote a number of books in Persian, notable among which are *Vird-ul-Muridin*, *Qasida-i-Jalaliyya*, *Qasida-i-Ghusliyya*, *Dastur-us-Salikin*, and *Majma-ul-Fawa'id*. His poetry is permeated with religious and mystical ideas and reflects the veneration in which he held his spiritual preceptor, Sheikh Hamza Makhdum.

#### PERSIAN UNDER THE MUGHALS

With the advent of the Mughal rule, Persian scholarship attained new heights in Kashmir. Not only were extensive works written on subjects like medicine, astronomy, mathematics, philosophy and religion but there appeared gems in poetry, literature, history, biography and travel. Persian language suited the temperament and taste of the Kashmirian scholar. The love and appreciation of beauty reflected in his works, represented the enchanting surroundings he lived in—the calm lakes, the snow-capped mountains, the lush green meadows, bubbling fountains, the multi-coloured flowers, the changing seasons with their varied hues. The peaceful rule of the Mughals and the generous patronage that the emperors and their governors bestowed on learning and literature, resulted in a full bloom of Persian scholarship in Kashmir.

and its sons and daughters carried to, and propagated the language in not only the narrow confines of the Valley but all over India. No wonder Kashmir acquired the epithet of *Iran-i-Saghir* or the "Little Iran".

Akbar and his learned courtier, Faizi, had even before the annexation of Kashmir, formed a high opinion of Persian scholars of Kashmir, the life and works of Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and Baba Daud Khaki contributing mainly to this estimation. And when Faizi came to Kashmir in the train of his patron and master, Akbar, he decided to stay on to enjoy the company of Kashmiri poets and scholars of Persian language. So did Urfi, another great poet. Shah Jehan's court poet, Kalim, was also attracted by the charm of Kashmir's beauty and the learning of her sons and daughters and stayed on in the Valley for years to complete his *Badshah-nama*. He was a constant companion of Kashmir's greatest Persian poet, Ghani, which accounts for the marked resemblance in their style and diction. While returning from the Mughal court to his home in Isfahan in Iran, the great poet, Saib, stayed in Kashmir for a considerable time enjoying the company of Ghani.

Kashmir excelled particularly in the production of historical literature in Persian. Akbar had the *Rajatarangini* translated into Persian by Mulla Ahmad Shahabadi. During Jehangir's time Malik Haider Chaudura and Narayan Kaul Ajiz wrote detailed history of Kashmir in Persian. Later Khwaja Muhammad Didamari and Birbal Kachru followed the tradition of writing the history of the Valley.

#### MULLA MUHSIN FANI

But an outstanding contribution by Kashmir to Persian literature particularly to a study of comparative religion and philosophy was made by Mulla Muhsin Fani, the celebrated author of *Dabistan-i-Mazahib*. Born in about 1615 this philosopher-poet belonged to a family which enjoyed a reputation for culture and learning.

Mulla Muhsin had his early education under his father, Sheikh Hasan. He however left Kashmir at a young age to study further at centres of Islamic culture and learning in Iran and India. He first took service under the ruler of Balkh, Nazar Muhammad Khan. After staying there for some time, he returned to India where his attainments in art and philosophy attracted the notice of Dara Shikoh. He was soon elevated to the position of the judge at Allahabad. Here he came in contact with a great Sufi of his time, Sheikh Habibullah.

Meanwhile the political rivalries and jealousies rampant at the Mughal court were responsible for his undoing. Prince Murad who conquered Balkh, found among the official papers several panegyrics



written by Fani in honour of the ex-ruler, Nazar Muhammad Khan, and also some correspondence in his hand. This evoked Shah Jehan's displeasure against the poet and he was deprived of his office and other privileges. Mulla Muhsin then retired to Kashmir where he set up a school and preached his own religious beliefs. He was highly respected for his erudition and eloquence and his house was frequented by the most distinguished men of Kashmir, including the governor of the province. Several scholars of note among whom were Mulla Tahir Ghani, the latter's brother, Mulla Zaman Nafi and Haji Aslam Salim, issued from his school.

But Fani's urge for travel took him again to Khorasan and after his return to his birth-place he took to a life of seclusion in a monastery built by Dara Shikoh on the river-bank at Qutb-dinpura (present Gurgari Mohala). Here in 1645 A.D. he wrote his *Dabistan-i-Mazahib* or the "School of Sects", a famous work on the religious and philosophical creeds of Asia. His liberal views on religion and admiration for the tenets of some other than Islam raised a storm of protest from the orthodox divines who condemned him as a *murtad* or apostate. The book has been of considerable interest to eminent scholars and students of philosophy in recent years and has been translated into many languages including French and English.

The *Dabistan* gives not only important information concerning the chief religions of the world in clear and explicit terms, but it agrees on the most material points with those of other accredited authors. "Fani enlivens his text by citing interesting quotations from the works of famous poets and philosophers, and by frequent references to books which deserve to be known. The whole work is interspersed with anecdotes and sayings characteristic of individuals and sects which existed in his times. To what he relates from other sources, he frequently adds reflections of his own, which evince a sagacious and enlightened mind. Thus he exhibits in himself an interesting example of Eastern erudition and philosophy. The *Dabistan* comprises, in its allusions, references practically to the whole history of Asia"<sup>1</sup>

Besides being an erudite writer in prose, Mulla Muhsin Fani was an accomplished poet. Among his collection of poems there is a moral essay entitled *Masdur-ul-Asar* or the 'Source of Signs'. His poems written in simple Persian are full of beautiful imagery, apt similes and metaphors :

Only the image of your eyes drunk with passion exists in my heart.  
None can keep a richer wine in his flask, than this of mine.

1 Shea and Troyer, Intro, to Translation of *Dabistan*, clxxix—cxcv.

Muhsin Fani died in 1671 A.D. and lies buried at Gurgari Mohala behind the Khanaqah of Dara Shikoh.

Fani, thy heavenward march is but gyration,  
Like what the compass on paper draws;  
For one foot moves, the other keeps its station.

#### TRAVELOGUE AND BIOGRAPHY

Mulla Muhammad Ali Kashmiri who went to Ahmadnagar in his youth and took service on the staff of the king, Sultan Burhan-al-Mulk, was a prolific writer in Persian prose. He was also an Arabic scholar and when Khan-i-Khanan conquered Ahmadnagar, Mulla Muhammad was taken on the latter's staff, and given the assignment of translating a famous work of Khwaja Sain-ud-din from Arabic to Persian. Mulla Muhammad Ali died at Malkapur in Berar and is buried there.

Another eminent Persian poet at the court of Jehangir was Mulla Muhammad Yusuf Kashmiri. His brother, Mulla Muhammad Sadiq, is the author of *Tabaqat-i-Shahjehani* which contains an account of the lives of eminent personalities who flourished under Timur and his successors down to the reign of Shah Jehan. Born in 1591 A.D., Sadiq spent the major part of his life at Delhi. He studied under Sheikh Abdul Haq Dehlvi. From a reference in this book itself, it is presumed that he wrote the *Tabqat-i-Shahjehani* in the year 1636. A manuscript copy is in the British Museum.

We are indebted to Khwaja Abdul Karim, a widely travelled Kashmiri, who lived during the rule of the later Mughals, for a fascinating travelogue containing an account of his experiences and observations during his extensive tours abroad.

The Khwaja earned distinction as a writer in Persian while still young. Being of an adventurous nature, he left Kashmir on a pilgrimage to Mecca. But while in Delhi he was held up due to Nadir Shah's invasion and the sack of the city. He approached Nadir who held the land route to Arabia, for a permit to travel to Mecca. Nadir Shah was struck by his boldness and intelligence and offered him service under him. He quickly won the confidence of Nadir Shah and became his foreign minister and on one occasion was deputed as Nadir's envoy to Balaclava and later to the Sultan of Turkey.<sup>1</sup> He was on his retirement allowed to proceed to Mecca.

During his journeys to Baghdad, Damascus, Aleppo, etc., Khwaja

<sup>1</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, p. 380.

Abdul Karim came in contact with several learned men and political leaders, and when he returned to India, he studied the social and political conditions of Indians and Europeans who had then settled in Bengal and on the Coromandal coast.

All this varied experience fitted the Khwaja who was gifted with a keen power of observation and a facile pen, to give an enlightening and graphic account of contemporary events in India. His fascinating *Memoirs* known also as *Nadir-nama* or *Tarikhi-Nadiri*, is written in an effective and interesting style and contains useful information on contemporary history of Iran and of India from 1739 to 1749 A.D.

Of considerable historical and literary interest are several biographies written in Persian during the medieval times. Khwaja Miram Bazaz (1575 A.D.) in his *Tazkara-i-Murshidin* gives short life-sketches of some noted saints, and Mulla Zihni (1655 A.D.) gives similarly in his *Tazkara-i-shor'a-i-Kashmir* biographies of, and selected verses from, noted Kashmiri poets. Baba Daud Mushakani wrote in 1653 a valuable book, *Asrar-ul-Abrar*, on similar lines.

#### PERSIAN POETS

During the first phase of Persian scholarship under the rule of the Sultans, the themes and the style of presentation and the language and metre used were in direct imitation of Iranian scholars who had come to Kashmir or whose works were introduced in the Valley by them. But the Mughal and Afghan period saw the flowering of the Kashmiris' talent in Persian literature. Because of the close association with the rest of India and the frequent travels of Kashmir's learned men to the famous centres of learning in the plains, and the presence in Kashmir of writers and poets from Delhi, Agra, Qandahar and Kabul, new standards were created and we find the emergence of an Indo-Kashmir literature in Persian. This is very much in evidence in the compositions of poets like Hubbi, Auji, Ghani, Fitrat, Brahman, Bulbul, Niku, and others.

Born in the Naushahar quarter of Srinagar in the year 1555 A.D., Khwaja Habibullah Hubbi, belonged to the famous Ganai family. His father was a leading salt merchant of his time and he entrusted the education of his son to Mulla Afaqi, and later to Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi. Hubbi, besides being a poet, was passionately devoted to music. He was the author of *Tanbih-ul-Qulub* and *Rahat-ul-Qulub*, treatises on mysticism. He is also the biographer of his teacher, Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi. Hubbi was a devoted Sufi and used often to be deeply engaged in the 'music of the mystics.' Considered as a great saint he received homage



from both the king and the commoner. Hubbi's poems, short and sweet are written in a simple style. They are full of ideas and show the "originality and freshness of his imaginative mind."<sup>1</sup>

World is an old hag who has killed a thousand husbands  
Oh heart, do not marry this widow out of foolishness.  
That wine of which a single drop cannot be contained in the  
nine skies

Hubbi ! how can it be contained in your cup ?  
Do not at any time say—"I am a lord and son of a lord."  
The pride of mankind lies in the beauty of service.

Persian poetry is replete with references to 'wine' and 'wine-houses' and one of the Kashmiri poets in Persian language who has given an entirely new interpretation to the ideas and imagery roused by these associations, was Auji, who lived during the governorship of Mirza Yusuf Khan (1587-1590 A.D.) and was patronized by the latter. Auji is credited with writing three thousand couplets which comprised his *Saqi-nama*.

#### MULLA TAHIR GHANI

But the greatest name associated with Persian poetry in Kashmir is that of Mulla Tahir Ghani, whose sonorous couplets speak volumes for their author's inborn poetic imagination and facile expression. Ghani won fame in his life-time not only in India but in Iran, the home of Persian. Famous poets and litterateurs of his time were attracted by his poetical compositions and travelled all the way from distant lands to meet him and to enjoy his company.

Not much is, however, known about his life; even his date and year of birth have not been established so far. It is surmised that he was born sometime during the early part of Shah Jehan's reign and lived throughout his life in a small house in Qutbdinpura quarter of Srinagar. Belonging to the family of Ashais, he was a close relation of Sheikh Yaqub Sarfi and a pupil of Mulla Muhsin Fani. Though he lived a life of penury, he never sought the company of the rich or of those wielding political power. He did not hanker after publicity and cheap fame.

The man made perfect seeks no glory and no singer ;

It is the new (small) moon, not the full, which needs be pointed  
out with a finger.

It is said of Ghani that he would bolt and lock the outer door of his house when he was in, and leave it open when he went out. On being asked the reason for this curious habit, he is said to have replied

1 *Sufi. Op. Cit.*, Vol. II, p., 474.

that the only article worth anything was *himself* and therefore he locked the door when he was in; and since there was nothing else of value to steal in the house, he left the door unlocked and open when he went out. In one of his couplets he compares his condition to a poor labourer who, lamenting his lot, exclaims :

The fruit of my labour is presented to someone else,  
And (I am like) a mill which grinds corn for the bread of others.

Ghani is said to have composed about a lakh of verses, but most of them are now lost. A collection of his 2,000 verses was printed in 1845, though some earlier anthologies of Persian poems mention that Ghani had left about twenty thousand verses.

The fame of Ghani as a great poet of his day reached the Imperial Court and Aurangzeb is said to have written to the governor, Saif Khan, to send him to Delhi. When the governor approached Ghani with the emperor's invitation, the poet asked him to report to the latter that Ghani was insane and therefore unfit to attend the Imperial Court. This was objected to by Saif Khan, whereupon Ghani flew at him, tore his collar and moved off. Three days later Ghani passed away and was buried near his house at Qutbdinpura (1668 A.D.)<sup>1</sup> His life is a perfect illustration of his famous couplet :

Not for itself the musk-deer bears its musk;  
Not for himself the Poet for his harvest cares.

Ghani was too independent a man to have followed slavishly the style and metre of earlier poets of Iran and Kashmir. Nearly every couplet of his carries a tinge of his birth-place and its beauty. We even find the use of a Kashmiri word here and there as for instance *Kralapan* or potter's thread in the following ;

"Your waist, as slender as potter's thread, serves to cut off heads  
from the bodies of your lovers, just as a potter sets free with  
his thread the earthen-ware from the revolving wheel."

#### CONTRIBUTION OF HINDUS TO PERSIAN

With the elevation of Persian to the status of court language during the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, the Brahmans faced a crisis in the pursuit of their traditional profession of government service. Shrewd as they have been, they took a wise decision and applied themselves to acquiring proficiency in the new language. No doubt, there is evidence to show, even long before the time of the Sultan, the Hindus of Kashmir had taken to the study of Persian. *Tarikh-i-Baihaqi* (Vol. II, p. 503), for instance, mentions Tilak, the son of a barber, "having studied in

1 The Bankipore Catalogue, Vol. III, p. 137,

Kashmir, and coming to Qazi Hassan of Shiraz and knowing eloquent Persian." Tilak flourished at Mahmud's court as an interpreter in Persian and Hindi. The description of the Valley by Alberuni in his *Kitab-ul-Hind* presupposes his contacts with some Kashmiri Brahmans who must have crossed over to north-west India and taken service under Mahmud Ghazni. Besides being Sanskrit scholars they must have been proficient in Persian too to have been able to convey information to the author so accurately and in detail. The fact that Srivara, Sultan Zain-ul-abidin's court-poet and Chronicler, knew both Persian and Arabic besides Sanskrit, shows that the Kashmiri Brahmans must have begun to study Persian quite some time before its adoption as the language of the court and medium of official correspondence.

But it was only during and after Zain-ul-abidin's reign that the Brahmans adopted Persian as their language of polite literature in general and soon their scholarship in this language reached new heights. Besides translating some of their religious books from Sanskrit to Persian, several poets composed devotional hymns and religious sermons in Persian. They wrote exquisite poetry and became master-writers of Persian prose. Even women studied Persian as is evidenced by a letter written to her brother in Persian verse by Rupa Bhawani. Kashmiri Brahmans who went in search of service, or were driven out following the persecution of Sikandar, to various cities in the rest of India, also acquired proficiency in Persian. One of the earliest scholars to have secured patronage at the court of Shah Jehan was Chandra Bhan Brahman. He became the favourite of both Dara Shikoh and Aurangzeb. His ancestors who had left the Valley during Sikandar's reign had settled at Lahore. Chandra Bhan was a pupil of Allama Abdul Hakim of Sialkot. While in Shah Jehan's service, Chandra Bhan attended on the emperor during his travels and recorded daily occurrences. He was later honoured with the title of *Rai* Chandra Bhan. His pen-name was 'Brahman' and he was considered to be a master of Persian language and literature and his poetical compositions and collection of *Letters* remained for long as models of chaste and simple Persian to be profitably copied by students of this language.

So also Lachiram Saroor, another Kashmiri Brahman, rose very high at the court of the Nawab of Oudh through his merit as a Persian writer and poet. Rai Rayan Anand Ram Karihalu who was a favourite of Shah Alam II was a great Persian and Arabic scholar as well as an accomplished poet.

In Kashmir proper, the name of Munshi Bhawanidas Kachru stands pre-eminent among Persian writers and poets. The original style of his *Bahr-i-Tavil* is held in high esteem. Pandit Taba Ram Turki



(1776-1847 A.D.), Satram Baqaya, Daya Ram Kachru, Aftab Bhan, Gobind Kaul, Kailash Dhar, and many other prose writers and poets flourished in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pandit Daya Ram Kachru wrote fascinating Persian poetry, describing the beautiful landscape in Kashmir. He entered the service of Wazir Wafadar Khan Sadozai and while in Kabul gave vent in plaintive and nostalgic numbers to his longing for his beloved homeland :

*Mara hub-i-watan ashafta tar kard*

*Name danam chira qismat badar kard*

*Zi joshe-i-girya chashmam Achhaval shud*

*Bihat shud Mar shud talab-i-Dal shud.*

The love for my homeland has turned me insane :

How is it that Fate should have driven me out of the land ?

with the intensity of grief [at separation from my beloved land] my  
eyes have become [the spring of] Achhaval,

Or maybe the [river] Vitasta, or the Mar [canal], or even the Dal  
lake.

“The Kashmiri Brahman”, says Sufi, “distinguished himself in Sanskrit and won the proud title of Pandit in the early history of India and he made a name in Persian in Medieval India. He is not behind others in English. He has thus won laurels in all the allied Aryan languages of the world and at different times in the cultural development of India.”<sup>1</sup>

### KASHMIRI

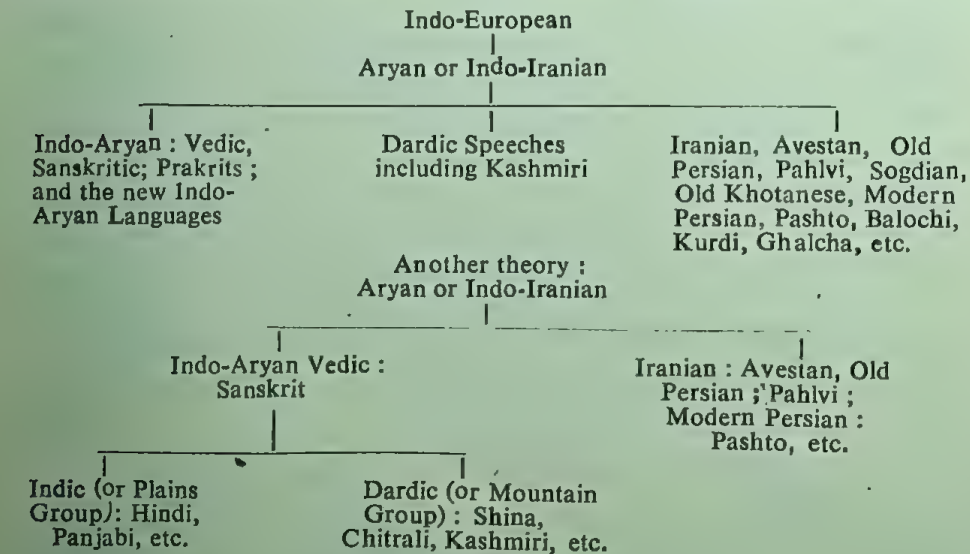
But though Sanskrit and Persian were the medium of polite literature, they became the domain of the learned few. The masses, on the other hand, spoke Prakrit which, with the admixture of words and phrases from the many languages spoken on the borders of the Valley, assumed the form a new vernacular—Kashmiri. Whereas during its early phase, the language was preponderatingly composed of Sanskrit words and idioms, its character changed considerably with the advent of Muslim rule in the fourteenth century, when Persian and Arabic words and expressions entered into its expanding vocabulary, shaping it to the form as it is spoken these days. No wonder it was during the early Sultan period that Kashmiri language attained a distinct status, and that its earliest-known literature is datable to only the fifteenth century A.D.

### ORIGIN

Several theories have been put forth regarding the origin of the Kashmiri language. It is traditionally believed by the Kashmiri Pandits—and scholars like Jules Block, George Morgenstierne and Ralph

L. Turner agree with them—that Kashmiri is an offshoot of the Indo-Aryan or Sanskrit language. Dr. Grierson's researches have, however, shown that there is, in addition to the Indo-Aryan or Sanskritic group and the Iranian group, a third one in the Aryan branch of Indo-European, the Dardic, which is intermediate to the Iranian and Indo-Aryan, and that Kashmiri is intimately connected with it. According to him, the common ancestors of the Indo-Aryans appear to have followed up the course of the Oxus and the Jaxartes into the highlying country round Khokand where a portion of them separated from the others marching south over the western passes of the Hindukush into the valley of the river Kabul, and thence into the plains of India where they settled as the ancestors of the present Indo-Aryans. The Aryans who remained behind on the north of the Hindukush and who did not share into the migration to the Kabul Valley spread eastwards and westwards. Those who migrated to the east, occupied the Pamirs and now speak Ghalchah. Another branch, the Dardic, separated and settled in what we call Dardistan. The word Dard is an ancient one and is of frequent occurrence in the early Sanskrit geographical works and Puranas. Greeks and Romans included under the name of the Dard country the whole mountainous tract between the Hindukush and the frontiers of India proper. The Aryan languages spoken in this region are therefore called Dardic. They are Kafir, Chitrali, Shina, Kashmiri and Kohistani.<sup>1</sup> The Kashmiri, as it is spoken nowadays, has been considerably influenced by the neighbouring languages of Tibetan stock.

The position can best be indicated by means of the following tables :



<sup>1</sup> *Lingulstic Survey of India, Vol. viii, part II.*

The complex question of the exact affiliation of Kashmiri remains still an open one. "The fact remains that ever since its earliest history, unlike its western neighbours like Shina and the Kafir dialects, Kashmiri has always remained under the tutelage of Sanskrit."<sup>1</sup> The earliest specimen of Kashmiri is the well-known verse in Kalhana's *Rajatarangini* where the author, to characterize the boorishness of the Domba relative of king Cakravarman, quotes the vernacular words spoken by him. Ranga, whose daughters, the dancers Hamsa and Nagalata, were taken by the king as his wives, was granted the village Helu in Jagir by the latter. But the document relating to the grant was not registered by the official recorder. Angrily Ranga shouts at him, "You son of a slave, why do you not write: *Rangas Helu dinna* (Helu is to be granted to Ranga)" ? In modern Kashmiri this would be *Rangas Hela dyurn*. Here the grammatical elements are traceable through Prakrit to Old Indo-Aryan (spoken form of Vedic Sanskrit).

That Kashmiri had become the popular language of the land long before the time of Kalhana (12th century A.D.) is shown by the use in the *Rajatarangini* of numerous Sanskritised versions of Kashmiri proverbs extant even today. For instance, in v-401 and viii-565, we have a reference to the well-known proverb : *nov shin chhu galan pranis shinas*, the new snow melts the old one. Similarly in vii-1226, there is a marked resemblance to the Kashmiri idiom : *myac ti thavanas na*, "he destroyed him and his house till the very earth."<sup>2</sup>

But it is a hundred years after Kalhana that the earliest known work in the old Kashmiri, *Mahanay Prakash*, was written by Siti Kantha. The theme of the book is Tantric worship and as its name suggests, it aims at finding the highest meaning of Truth through Tantric rituals. A close study of its passages which are rather difficult to understand now shows the use of a large number of Sanskrit words.

Though for over a hundred years after *Mahanay Prakash* we do not come across any work in Kashmiri, it seems that the language had made further headway. For, in the fourteenth century when Lalleshwari appeared on the scene, she realised that the times demanded the propagation of her doctrine in the language of the masses. She poured forth her heart, rich in spiritual and mystic experience, in Kashmiri verse. Her language is easier to follow and in some cases comes very near to that spoken now. Her Sayings which became popular were learnt by heart by her followers and in this way were passed down from generation to generation. A collection of these was put in writing by Bhaskara

1 Suniti Kumar Chatterji, *Kashmir*, Vol. iv, p. 75.

2 For other passage of similar nature see vii-1115, viii-148, viii-2546.



Rajanaka towards the end of the seventeenth century A.D.

Lalleshwari in her *Vakyas* begins with a narration of her own spiritual experiences. She tells us that she wandered far and wide in search of Truth, made pilgrimages to holy places and sought salvation through observance of rituals, but all in vain. Then suddenly she found the 'Truthful One' in her own home :

*Lalla bo drayas lolare*  
*Chhandan loosum dyan kyaho rat,*  
*Wuchhum Pandit tah pananih gare,*  
*Suy me rutmas nisthur tah sat.*  
 Passionate with longing in my eyes  
 Searching wide, and seeking day and night  
 Lo ! I beheld the Truthful One, the Wise,  
 Here in my own house, filling my gaze.  
 That was the day of my auspicious star.  
 Breathless I held Him my guide to be.

But to reach this stage she had to work hard and undergo the exacting discipline of *Yoga* :

*Damadam karum daman hale*  
*Prazalyom deep tai naneyam zat*  
*Gnanaki ambar pairim tane*  
*Yim pad Lalli vani tim hrydi ankh.*  
 So my lamp of knowledge blazed afar  
 My bright soul stood revealed to me.  
 I then flung my inner light far and wide  
 And, with darkness all around me sealed,  
 Did I garner truth and hold Him tight.

Meanwhile Sanskrit had been supplanted by Persian as court language and a number of Sayyids who were scared away by Timur from Persia and Central Asia came and settled down in Kashmir. Their contacts with indigenous saints and savants gave rise to an eclectic school of Islamic Rishis who also poured forth their preachings and teachings in vernacular. The founder of the Order, Sheikh Nur-ud-din, born in about 1377 A.D., conveyed his mystical experiences and teachings in hundreds of couplets known as *shrukh* (Sans. *sutra*) which became current coins of quotation among the Kashmiris who learnt them by heart. His ideas and experiences can be gathered from the following verses given in translation :

The lover is he who burns with love,  
 Whose self shines like gold.  
 When man's heart flares up with the blaze of love

Then shall he reach the Infinite.  
 Shield not thyself against His arrows,  
 Turn not the face from His sword.  
 Consider misfortune as sweet as sugar.  
 Therein lies thy salvation  
 In this world and the next.

In the collection of his sayings known as *Nur-nama* and *Rishi-nama* we find a marked influence of Persian and Arabic words the number of which increases in the later works.

Again there is a long gap of over a hundred years of which no literature in Kashmiri is now extant. A mythological poem *Banasur-vadha* composed in the fifteenth century is perhaps the oldest narrative poem in Kashmiri so far known.

Khwaja Habibullah Naushahri who was a profound scholar in Persian also composed mystic poems in Kashmiri. Born in the middle of the sixteenth century he is the connecting link between the mystic poetry of earlier period and the 'lol' or love lyrics which were a feature of Kashmiri poetry in succeeding centuries. Complains he :

From far off he shot at me arrows of fascination,  
 Then ran away having injured my heart.  
 O, the charm of his casting a look back !  
 He saw me and yet pretended not to know !

#### HABBA KHATUN AND ARNIMAL

This new movement—the 'lol' or love-lyric was typified by a short poem, generally the expression of a single mood having human love as its sole expression. It is very musical, brief, abounding in rhymes and assonances, a cry from the lover's heart. And as the earliest foundation of Kashmiri poetry was laid by a mystic hermitess, Lalleshwari, the new movement was brought in by another woman, the inimitable Habba Khatun, the poetess-queen of Kashmir.

Born in the picturesque little village of Candahar, just off the Srinagar-Jammu road, in a countryside famous for saffron fields, Habba Khatun, was eminently fitted to voice the hopes and fears of a country-girl brought up in the charming surroundings of the broad-leaved che-nars, the tall, slender poplars, rushing torrents, calm lakes and majestic mountains. She received what little education was then available to a country-lass reading the Quran and reciting its verses in the mornings and evenings. She was married early to a peasant boy, but she could not be happy with an illiterate husband. Out of the constant conflict of her

early married life was born that nostalgic and melancholy strain in her songs that came to be the characteristic of her poetry. She gave vent to her unhappiness in her own compositions singing them loudly in her melodious voice.

And one day she attracted the notice of the prince Yusuf Shah Chak who listened to her sonorous voice and captivating songs while out hunting in the countryside. Both fell deeply in love with one another. The prince quickly had her divorced from her husband, and took her as his wife, changing her name from Zooni to that of Habba Khatoon by which name she is known to the world today.

She wielded an enormous influence on Yusuf Shah who soon ascended the throne and through her wisdom and charming personality guided the destinies of the kingdom through troublous times. But the political forces were too strong at the time to leave the king and queen in peace. Akbar was extending his influence to the little kingdom and Yusuf Shah was compelled to offer his allegiance in person to the emperor. The latter detained him and Yusuf had to spend the rest of his life in Bihar, away from his home and his beloved queen.

It was this forced separation from her husband that brought out the best 'lol' pieces from the queen-poet. In her plaintive songs replete with the pangs of separation from her beloved husband she poured forth her heart.

The distant meadows are in bloom.  
 With flowers in various colours spread far and wide,  
 Come, let us to the mountain meads.  
 Sweet is the ritual of love.  
 I would deck you, my love, with ornaments  
 And in henna dye your hands.  
 I would anoint the body with fragrant kisses.  
 Offer you wine in golden goblets  
 And give the lotus of love which blooms in the lake of my heart.  
 I shall strew the meadows with flowers for thee!  
 Come, come, my Lover of Flowers.

A century later there is yet another lady, this time a Kashmiri Panditani, by name Arnimal, whose lyrics have captivated the hearts of Kashmiris. Her songs have been set to music and their imagery and pathos are moving to the extreme. Born in a well-to-do family, Arnimal was deserted early by her husband, Munshi Bhawanidas, a profound Persian scholar and a prolific writer. This desertion awakened the muse in Arnimal. Laments she :



My complexion which was like July jessamine  
 Has assumed the pallor of the yellow faded rose.  
 O, when will he come and let me have  
 A look at his beloved face.  
 Flowers have bloomed in my father's home,  
 But thou comest not and I feel like one  
 Accursed, alone and scoffed by all.  
 God grant happiness to my beloved !  
 Let him be kind to others if he will.  
 I have at least the satisfaction that my love is happy.  
 I plighted my troth to thee.  
 Why did you break your plighted word ?  
 O sweet, O dear,  
 I long for thee.

Her poetry is devoid of the mystic touch and of religious experiences. It speaks of the heart of the human soul. After separation from her husband, the spinning wheel became her constant companion, and she composed her songs in tune with the sound of the revolving wheel :

Do not murmur and grumble  
 O spinning wheel !  
 Thy straw-rings I shall oil  
 Raise thy head from under the earth, O hyacinth.

With Arnimal ends the second, the *lol*, phase of Kashmiri poetry. Thenceforth Kashmiri was the medium of expression of several talented poets and writers. Voluminous literature was produced on mysticism, epic poetry, romance, biography, fables and folk-lore. A dictionary and a grammar of the language were also compiled. This upsurge in Kashmiri, however, took place in the recent past and will be dealt with in a later chapter.

### DANCE, DRAMA AND MUSIC

That Islam did not enter Kashmir in its puritanic form was mainly responsible for the encouragement extended by the Sultans and Mughals to the cultivation of fine arts by the people. The tolerant cult of Sufism which predominated during this period was partial to dance and music which it believed to be essential in bringing about that state of ecstasy which enabled men to see God face to face.

The traditions in dance did not, therefore, die with the advent of Islam. But as in other branches of learning, the classical dance forms were materially altered with the absorption of influences from the dance technique of Persia and Central Asia. This, however, took

considerable time to develop. During the early Muslim rule, the Indian classical dances continued to hold their ground.

What form dancing took during the early Muslim period has been fortunately described by Jonaraja and Srivara in their Chronicles. The latter was an accomplished musician himself and rose to be the head of the music department during Hassan Shah's reign. We learn from him that the dancers and musicians of his time were well versed in the art and understood all its modes and intricacies. Zain-ul-abidin was a great patron of dance, drama and music. There were at his court several accomplished dancers and musicians who "were learned and dignified and displayed their taste and intelligence on the stage. The renowned Tara and the actors sang various songs to the *naracha* tune, and to every kind of music. And the songstress Utsava who was even like Cupid's arrow, charming to the eye and proficient in dance, both swift and slow, entranced everybody. The dancers, who described the forty-nine different emotions seemed even like ascending and descending notes of music. As they danced and sang, the eye and the ear of the audience seemed to contend for the keenest enjoyment."<sup>1</sup>

Sultan Hassan Shah was a musician himself and he naturally patronised dancers and musicians. He had a troupe of court dancers, who gave performances on the occasion of festivals, for the edification of the king and his courtiers. "The female dancers of the king", writes Srivara, "shone beauteously and bright like the lamps at night, they were inflamed by the god of love and were young and full of emotion, even as the lamps were fed by wax, and were new and supplied with wick." Srivara records the names of three danseuse—Ratnamala, Dipamala, and Nripamala—who distinguished themselves in their art. Giving a graphic account of a dance recital by Ratnamala, he writes :

"Her forehead was marked with *tilaka* ; the king praised her dancing and owned that she had melted the hearts of all by her steps and her movements, by her tremor and her action. How she commenced the expected dance ! And how her gestures, her movements, the expression of her passions, and the swelling song which flowed incessantly from her throat, inflamed all men !"

He has a few words about the ornaments and the way of dressing her hair. "Her song was without a fault, her person was decorated with jewels. The beauty of her face was nectar and a drop of nectar hung from her nose in the form of a pearl pendant. The pearls which hung interwoven in the locks of hair fell on her cheeks and looked as

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1 Sriv., p. 133.

drops of nectar melting away from her moonlike face.”<sup>1</sup>

Hussain Shah Chak (1563-70) was also a connoisseur of dance and music. During his tolerant reign, arts and letters flourished and people celebrated fairs and festivals with great eclat. Writes Srivara—“Many a time the king witnessed the dances of beautiful women, and looked at their youthful beauties, and heard their songs, and gave them clothes of gold and of silver.”<sup>2</sup>

With the advent of Mughal rule in 1586, Kashmir received the impact of art influences from Delhi where the classical Indian dancing had already absorbed the technique of the dance forms of Turkistan. During their numerous visits to the Valley, the emperors and their courtiers witnessed dance performances in their enchanting gardens and other beauty spots. The dancers recited songs in Persian instead of in Sanskrit. The Indian *gagra* and the Turkish cap of a Hafiza (as the danseuse came to be known) reflect a remarkable moulding of Indian and Persian styles into a new synthesis. Sufism was mainly responsible in bringing it about. The very names *Hafiza* and *Sufiana Kalam* imply Sufi influence.

The Hafiza dance became popular among both the upper classes and the general public from the Mughal period down to the beginning of the present century. Even some of the tyrannical Pathan governors fell a prey to the charms of the Hafizas. Amir Khan Jawansher, for instance, maintained a large troupe at State expense. He would spend most of his time in the gardens on the Dal, enjoying the graceful dance and entrancing music of his favourite Hafizas.

The Hafizas belonged to a class of professional dancers who had to undergo a long and exacting training under expert masters. The orchestra accompanying them was invariably of the *Sufiana Kalam* type—*Santoor*, *Saz-i-Kashmir*, *Sitar* and *Tabla*. They sang Kashmiri and Persian couplets and ghazals, explaining the meaning with appropriate gestures and movements of hands, feet and eyes, swaying the body at each step half-way around to left or right. They wore a dress very much corresponding to that worn by the Kathak dancers in northern India—a tight-fitting short blouse and a skirt of enormous width which was worn gathered tightly about the waist. She wore a embroidered cap, draped over by a *dopatta* of filmy gauze-like silk.

Usually, two Hafizas took part in a performance. The dance would begin with music from the supporting orchestra, the Hafizas taking up the refrain with suitable movements and gestures. They

1 *Ibid.*, p. 232.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 393.



moved in a semi-circle with short steps gliding effortlessly across the floor. The movement of feet required great agility and long practice. The dancers also brought into play their eyes as much as the part of the body which required skilful muscle control in order to express various modes and emotions.

Side by side with the Hafiza dance for the sophisticated audiences, there developed a popular one for the common people's entertainment. Probably introduced by the Afghans from Kabul, the *Bacha* dance is still very popular with village audiences, particularly during the harvest time. A boy in his teens is trained in the Hafiza style of dancing and made to wear his hair long and don a similar dress. Instead of a more elaborate and highly skilled orchestra which accompanied the Hafiza, the *Shahnai* and an ordinary *Dholak* supply the music.

The stage technique seems to have been fairly developed in Zain-ul-abidin's time. "The stage was like a garden where the lamps on it looked like rows of the Champaka flower.....In some places rows of lamps were reflected on the water.....and those who were at a distance doubted if the lights were really lamps, or the spirits of former kings assembled to view the present sovereign."<sup>1</sup>

Yodhabhatta, a poet in Kashmiri is recorded to have composed a drama, "pure like a mirror, called the *Jainaprakasa*, in which he gave an account of the king."<sup>2</sup>

And the people witnessed the drama on the "stage effulgent with decorations" and "distinguished by the excellence of sense, gestures, and feelings" as a "four-faced god."<sup>3</sup>

From some references in the later Sanskrit Chronicles, it can be inferred that dramatic performances were regularly given by professional "actors, skilled in acting, and graceful like so many moons placed in a row. Jesters were like fun personified, with their hanging breasts and artificial beards, with the movements of their teeth and brows, with their jests and antics, their laughter, and the rolling of their eyes, expressive of various emotions, and with their cries, mimicking the cries of animals."<sup>4</sup>

The descendants of these professional actors, the *Bhands* or *Bhagats* are still found in some villages in Kashmir. "Their acting", says Lawrence, "is excellent and their songs are often very pretty. They are clever at improvisation and are fearless as to its results. One of

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1 Srivara, p. 133-34

2 *Ibid.*, p. 136.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, p. 230.

their favourite themes is the caricature of village life which is often very amusing and exact."<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps in no other department of art is the synthesis of Indian and Persian influences discernable in medieval Kashmir, as in music. In a country where we find a Mullah translating the Mahabharata from Sanskrit, and a Pandit writing a devotional hymn in Persian, there is nothing surprising about the evolution of the distinctive classical music known as *Sufiana Kalam*, with its style borrowed from Persian music and its *maqams* corresponding to the Indian *ragas*.

The traditions of classical and folk music were assiduously maintained in the time of the Sultans who were one and all great lovers of music, some of them being highly proficient in the art. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin was a classical singer himself and retained a large number of musicians at his court. His Chronicler, Srivara, who was not only an accomplished musician but also a learned scholar of the *Sangita Sastra*, has recorded names of some of the music masters patronized by the king. There was one Sujya, the pupil of Abdul Qadir who pleased the king with his proficiency in music. The Sultan invited masters of music from Khorasan. Mullazada who came from the latter country "received inestimable favours from the king by playing on a lute made of tortoise shell." Another, named Mulla Jamal, was a singer of Persian and Arabic songs, and so was Zaffran who sang with Srivara. the "difficult Turuksha metres before the king." The king encouraged the singing of North and South Indian *ragas* as well, and also Kashmiri tunes and verses. The king introduced some new musical instruments like the Rabab from Persia and Turkistan. A poet, named Utta Soma, flourished at the royal court. He used to write verses in the Kashmiri language, and besides being the author of the king's biography, wrote a book, "named *Manaka*, on music which he dedicated to the Sultan.... When Dongar Sen, the raja of Gwalior heard of the Sultan's taste for music he sent him all the standard books on Indian music."<sup>2</sup>

Zain-ul-abidin's son, Haider Shah, learnt to play on the lute from his father's tutor, the celebrated Khwaja Abdul Qadir, and on other instruments from Pandit Srivara.<sup>3</sup> He was so well skilled in playing on the lute that, as Srivara records, "he gave lessons even to professors". Another musician at his court, Vahlala, who earned the favour of the king, played on the Rabab.

But it was Sultan Hassan Shah who organised the teaching of music on a methodical basis and appointed professors and teachers to

1 Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 312.

2 Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol, II, p. 551.

3 Srivara, p. 188.

run classes in his Department of Music. Pandit Srivara who was "the head of a section of this Department", records that Sultan Hassan Shah's fame rested on his patronage of music and on his being a master of this art. "The king had composed a book of songs in Persian language and in the dialect of Hindustana, and who does not praise him for it ?"<sup>1</sup> He is reputed to have had over a thousand classical musicians at his court. He invited Karnatak musicians to Kashmir who popularised a number of Karnatak *ragas* there. "The singers from Karnata", says Srivara, "sat gracefully before the king as if they represented the six tunes viz : Kedara, Ganda, Gandhara, Desha, Bhangala, and Malava."<sup>2</sup>

The most skilful musicians at his court were Wahab-ud-din and Shikshakara. "Their charming voice issued from their faultless throat and pleased all men ; they had studied the art of singing and were well-skilled in instruments."

His fame as a patron of music spread far and wide. A celebrated musician named Pavarakdana "came to Kashmira from his distant country and sang songs composed by himself in the assembly and the king was pleased with him and showered gold on him."<sup>3</sup> At the end of the recital, the king asked Srivara to hold a discussion on music with the visiting professor. "And when the discussion in the assembly had been closed by a reference to books on music", records Srivara, "and when Pavarakdana heard me speak about duet songs, he expressed his wonder, and exclaimed that the Kashmirians were wonderfully skilful people, knowing all the Sastras." And the king suitably rewarded his court musician on this victory.

Among the Chak Sultans, Hussain Shah and Yusuf Shah were great patrons of dance and music. Hussain Shah is said to have been greatly enamoured of his musicians and when pleased with their performances used to "give them clothes of gold and silver" in reward. Yusuf Shah was a connoisseur of music and his queen, Habba Khatun, was a musician herself. She introduced the melody of *Rast Kashmiri*.

Mirza Haider Dughlat, during his stay in Kashmir as its virtual ruler in the middle of the sixteenth century, devoted much of his time and attention to music. Jehangir speaking of Mirza Haider's interest in music at that time says ; "There were many skilled people there. They were skilled in music, and their lutes, dulcimers, harps, drums and flutes were celebrated."

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 204.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 231.

3 Srivara, p. 233.



The Mughals do not seem to have been very enthusiastic about the musicians of Kashmir, although Akbar paid "much attention to the art" and "there were numerous musicians at court, Hindus, Iranis, Turanis and Kashmiris."

Kashmiri music which shows strong resemblances to both Indian and Persian music has, however, a distinctive and fascinating pattern of its *maqams* or *ragas*. Although they have a large number of percussion and strung instruments, the music is, in the main, vocal. There is hardly any 'solo' music, it being chiefly sung in chorus. Music making is a community activity. There is no individualism run riot, there are no prima donnas, no virtuosi as such. In this respect Kashmiri music is unique.

Even the *Sufiana Kalam*, which lays stress on the words or text of the songs, is always sung in chorus. The metre of the verse falls well into the shape of the *tala*, the *bols* of which, incidentally, are very different from those of India. It has about fifty-four *maqams* (modes), out of which some bear Indian names like *Bhairavi*, *Lalit*, and *Kalyan*, while others have Persian names as, for example, *Isfahani*, *Dugah*, *Panjgah*, *Iraq*, *Rast-i Farsi* and *Sehgah*. The most prevalent *tals* are *Sehtal*, *Nimdur*, *Dur-i-Khafif* and *Turki Zarb*. The *maqams* too have their time significance, *i. e.*, some of them are morning *maqams*, some evening and so on. Accompaniments are invariably in unison and all songs are preceded by a kind of *alap*.

Of the instruments, the Santoor is the Veena of Kashmir. It has 100 strings stretched over a hollow wooden frame of mulberry wood. These are played with two little delicate sticks, beautifully carved and slightly curved at the end. The range of the instrument is limited only to an octave and a half. There are eight strings to each note and it is this duplication of strings that gives the Santoor the quality of something like a good harpsichord with an eight foot pedal. There are other instruments in use in classical music—the Saz which is bowed, the Kashmiri Sitar and a Dukra.

The most popular and attractive instrument used in folk music is the Rabab, introduced originally by Zain-ul-abidin from Turkistan. It can be described as a kind of predecessor to the Indian Sarod. It is simpler and the difference in tone is due to the slightly different construction of the instrument and to the fact that the playing strings are of gut, not of steel.

## PAINTING

With the advent of Islam in the fourteenth century, the delineation of living forms receded to the background, and in its place floral

designs and calligraphy became the forte of the artists of Kashmir. The formal prohibition by the Muhammadan law of the representation of animate nature in art resulted in virtual suppression of painting and sculpture as fine arts in all countries under Muhammadan rule, from the founding of the Caliphate of Baghdad down to the beginning of the thirteenth century. But with the decline of the power of the Caliphs, the prohibition ceased to have full effect and consequently we find Sultan Zain-ul-abidin encouraging painting. Mulla Jamil, his court musician, was pre-eminent as a painter as well.

The unsettled times which followed Zain-ul-abidin's reign, drove art to the background and it was not till the conquest of the Valley by Akbar, that painting came into its own. Akbar's dictum that "a painter had quite peculiar means of recognising God," removed the ban on painting of animate objects. "For, a painter in sketching anything that has life, and in devising the limbs one after another, must come to feel that he cannot bestow personality upon his work, and is thus forced to thank God the Giver of Life, and will thus increase his knowledge."<sup>1</sup>

"Akbar," says Abul Fazal, "had from his earliest youth shown a great interest in painting and given it every encouragement, regarding it both as a means of study and as an amusement." The Kashmiri painter taking his cue from the court painters, produced fine specimens of miniatures and developed a style of his own, known as the Kashmiri *Qalam*. Whereas the main subjects dealt with were secular in conformity with the fashion of the day, the religious themes were not neglected. There is a remarkable set of twentyfour large paintings on cotton, preserved in the Indian Section of the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, that was produced in Kashmir about the middle of the sixteenth century. These cotton paintings are said to have been illustrations of a manuscript book of stories. The subjects comprise many battles and scenes of bloodshed. The most pleasing and best preserved composition represents a central garden plot with chenar trees and highly decorated palace in the Iranian style. The rocky scenery found in all, or almost all the pictures is connected with Kashmir.

Several pieces of Kashmiri *Qalam* are still extant in the Srinagar Museum, and in a few private collections. During Jehangir's reign, this school attained its Zenith. He prided himself on being an excellent connoisseur of painting and did a great deal to stimulate the art in Kashmir.

The Kashmiri painter obtained a delicate shade by allowing

<sup>1</sup> *Ain-i-Akbari*, Trans. by Blochmann, Vol. I, p. 108.

water to stand until it had completely evaporated, thus depositing a slight sediment. The process known as *abina* gave a charming tone to the picture. "Water", says Sufi, "was, of course, the principal medium through which all the pigments were applied, but with this certain fixatives were mixed, such as gum, glue, raw sugar and linseed water."<sup>1</sup>

The Kashmiri artist invariably brought into his painting the beauty and grandeur of a typical Kashmir landscape. Several paintings show local peculiarities in social customs, economic conditions and dress. In a portrait of Sheikh Nur-ud-din, the patron saint of Kashmir, the artist has depicted these faithfully. A running stream, a chain of hills, green verdure and local fauna are boldly represented, and the Kangri, the wooden sandals, the *pattu* garments and the grass matting give us a clue to the social and economic conditions of the times in which the artist lived. Another remarkable feature of the paintings of this time is that besides the kings and courtiers, the artist wielded his brush freely to portrait Muslim saints and apostles which shows the freedom and tolerance allowed in the sphere of art and culture.

The Kashmiri artist, however, excelled in producing book illustrations. Numerous manuscripts in Sanskrit and Persian, discovered during the last two centuries, are copiously illustrated with miniature paintings of exquisite beauty. A fine collection of mythological scenes with beautifully designed and illuminated ornaments was exhibited in the Indian Art Exhibition held in Delhi in 1903. This consisted of seventy-two illustrations from the *Ramayana*. The owner gave the following particulars regarding these :

"The pictures formed part of a Sanskrit *Ramayana* which was written in golden letters in Kashmir during Jehangir's time. The text for some reasons was destroyed and the pictures taken out and preserved. It is known that the book remained in the King's library for centuries but fell into the hands of a soldier during the mutiny of 1857, when shortly thereafter it was purchased by me. The beauty of these paintings is remarkable and their faithful portraiture of Indian life of considerable historic value."

With the Hindu painters of the times, the most favourite theme was Saivism. We are presented with many pictures dedicated to this aspect of Hinduism. A typical example is the representation of the great *Yagna* of Daksaprajapati, the father of Sati. The background to the story of this religious legend in which Sati immolates herself for

<sup>1</sup> *Kashir*, Vol. II, p. 556.



the insulting treatment meted out by her father to her husband, Lord Siva, is conveyed in several side scenes. But the main theme is the solemn and sad aftermath when the interrupted *Yagna* is concluded by Daksaprajapati bearing the head of a goat with which the Lord, on the entreaty of the assembled gods and Rishis, brings him to life again. On every face from that of the attendants to the Holy Trinity—Brahma, Vishnu and Maheswar—are writ large horror, remorse and penitence.

In contrast to this painting of solemn awe there is one depicting Siva as *Nataraj*. With Sakti seated on a lotus throne in the bosom of the snow-clad Himalayas, and gods and goddesses watching in ecstasy the rhythmic movements of the Lord, the painting is a masterpiece of aesthetic representation. The depiction of Kashmirian landscape, dress and form of the figures, cannot escape notice.

Apart from book illustrations and the portraiture of the ten Avatars of Vishnu, most of the paintings are devoted to Durga in the form of the 18-handed Sharika, or 4-handed Ragnia, conforming to the representation of philosophic conceptions of Kashmir Saivism.

"The accession of Aurangzeb in 1658," observes Havel, "completely altered the privileged position which artists had enjoyed at the Mughal Court, and from that time interest is mainly concentrated on the independent Hindu schools, the most important of which were located in Rajputana and Gujarat, and later on in some of the Himalayan principalities."<sup>1</sup> During the later eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth century, therefore, the Kashmiri artists influenced by the painters of Basohli and Kangra, produced some specimens of secular themes. An attempt was made to produce portraits conforming to realism, and there are some specimens of the depiction of historical and descriptive subjects.

#### CALLIGRAPHY

The medieval painter of Kashmir had a restricted field to work in, particularly with regard to wall-painting or murals. Every strict Muhammadan valued calligraphy as a finer art than that of the picture painter, for it could not be suspected as irreligious. "The letter, a magical power, is spiritual geometry, emanating from the pen of invention; a heavenly writ from the hand of fate"—so says Abul Fazal.

There were eight calligraphy systems recognised in the Muhammadan world. With their deft artistic fingers, Kashmiri artists excelled in penmanship. Sultan Zain-ul-abidin is believed to have first imported a number of calligraphists from Central Asia, and soon

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1 E.B. Havell, *Indian Sculpture and Painting*, p. 209-10.







Interior of the Shah Hamadan mosque. Note the ornamental panelled walls.



Kashmir produced artistically written manuscripts with illumined borders.

Muhammad Hussain of Kashmir was the court calligraphist of Akbar and was honoured by the title of *Zarin Qalam* (of golden pen). Abdul Fazal says that Muhammad Hussain surpassed his master, Maulana Abdul Aziz. His extensions and curvatures show everywhere a proper proportion to each other, and art critics consider him equal to Mulla Mir Ali. Jehangir calls him "the chief of the elegant writers of the day", and as a mark of his great appreciation of the artist, presented him with an elephant. Muhammad Hussain died in 1611, six years after Akbar's death.<sup>1</sup> His contemporary, Ali Chaman, was also a noted calligraphist at Akbar's court.

Another noted calligraphist, Muhammad Murad Kashmiri, flourished at the court of Shah Jehan. The emperor conferred upon him the title of *Shirin Qalam* (the sweet pen). "His influence over contemporary calligraphists was extraordinary. The curvature of his letters was universally acclaimed to be superb. Muhammad Muhsin, the younger brother of Muhammad Murad, was also a well-known calligraphist."<sup>2</sup>

Shah Jehan patronized another Kashmiri calligraphist—Mulla Baqir—who was considered to be a master of *Nasta'liq*, *Naskh* and *Shikast*.<sup>3</sup>

The Kashmiri scribe used a reed-pen in writing and as a miniature painter his line acquired thereby more uniformity and regularity, the precision of a medallist rather than the fluency of the habitual brush writer. He invented an ink which could not be washed off with water and his manuscripts were thus in great demand.

## ARCHITECTURE

"The mosques and *Ziarats* (tombs of saints) of Kashmir converted to Islam since 1346," observes Dr. Goetz, "seem to be an adaptation of the preceding wooden architecture of the last Medieval period: cubic block houses with a low pyramidal grass roof and a *ma'zina* on top, the spire of which is obviously an adaptation of the Buddhist *Chhatravali* and Hindu *Sikhara*."

Although the wooden architecture is prominently associated with the Muhammadan rule in Kashmir, there is no doubt that the mode that is still largely used had an ancient history. Even during the Hindu

<sup>1</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol. II, p. 559.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> *Tazkira-i-Khushnavisan* pp. 100-101.

and Buddhist period, religious and secular buildings were constructed in timber, as is evidenced by several references in the *Rajatarangini* to the founding of towns and cities of which, due to the impermanence of the material used in their construction, there is now no trace. In support of its ancient usage may be quoted the very style of this wooden architecture, and its suitability to the climate, country and the needs of the people. Although, in the matter of this wooden architecture, the Muhammadans carried on the established tradition of the Valley and adopted the architectural style of their predecessors, they were not content to perpetuate the style unchanged. They adapted it to their own use ; gave it a new complexion by grafting on it the structural forms and decorative motifs peculiarly associated with Muslim architecture. They gave it, for instance, a spaciousness that could hardly have been dreamt of by the older Hindu builders. ^

Sultan Zain-ul-abidin appears to have encouraged and patronized the wooden architecture in Kashmir. Srivara, his court historian, gives a long list of buildings that he constructed in "brick and wood." Some of the famous palaces he had built were extant during the rule of Mirza Haider Dughlat who records that the Sultan built a palace, all of wood, in Zainagir, and on the island in the Wular lake. "First of all," records the Mirza, "he emptied a quantity of stones into the lake, and on those constructed a foundation or floor of closely-fitting stones measuring two hundred square *gaz* (yards) in extent, and ten *gaz* in height. Hereupon he built a charming palace, and planted pleasant groves of trees, so that there can be but few more agreeable places in the world."

About the Sultan's palace in the capital, the Mirza records : "It has twelve storeys some of which contain fifty rooms, halls and corridors. The whole of this lofty structure is built of wood." Mirza Dughlat, in another place, in a somewhat florid style, adds : "In the town, there are many lofty buildings constructed of fresh-cut pine. Most of these are, at least, five storey high ; each storey contains apartments, halls, galleries and towers. The beauty of their exterior defies description, and all who behold them for the first time, bite the finger of astonishment with the teeth of admiration."<sup>1</sup>

#### MOSQUE OF MADIN SAHIB

With the decline of Hindu rule following a long period of political instability and chaos, the art of the stone mason had been too long forgotten for the Muhammadans to revive it. True, there are a few instances of their having converted stone temples into mosques and tombs, but this was done merely by using such of the old architectural members as

<sup>1</sup> *Tarikh-i-Rashidi*, Trans. Ellias and Ross, p. 425.

they could and completing the rest of the structure in rubble or brick. For example the mosque of Madin Sahib at Zadibal in Srinagar, which bears an inscription recording its erection in the year 1444—in the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin—is built on the plinth of an ancient Hindu temple. To the north of the mosque is the tomb of the saint. The tomb is celebrated for the remarkable tile decoration on its eastern wall. Mr. Nicholls of the Archaeological Survey of India who visited the tomb in 1905 found the left spandrel of the entrance arch adorned with a beautifully executed beast with the body of a leopard and the trunk of a human being, apparently shooting with bow and arrow at its own tail while a fox was quietly looking on among flowers and “cloud forms.”<sup>1</sup> Sir John Marshall is, however, of the opinion that the tile work does not belong to the original edifice, but to a later restoration of the Mughal period. “The tile work, remarks Sir John in his Note written in 1908 on Archaeological work in Kashmir, “is very valuable—one of the most valuable antiquities which Kashmir possesses, and it is pathetic to see it trampled on and defaced or destroyed by the villagers. There are only three monuments that I know of in India where such tiles can be found.”

#### TOMB OF ZAIN-UL-ABIDIN'S MOTHER

Another monument in masonry of Zain-ul-abidin's reign is the tomb of his mother in Srinagar on the right bank of the river below Zaina Kadal. One of the oldest Muhammadan buildings in Kashmir, it has been erected on the basement of an older temple, the plan of which seems to have suited the construction in brick of the conventional Muslim tomb. The figure is octagonal and ornamented with Saracenic arches surmounted by a single dome, with four smaller ones surrounding it. Over the posterior gate there is an inscription in Persian. The principal features of the tomb are the glazed tiles and moulded bricks which are studded, at intervals, in the exterior walls, the semi-circular brick projections on the drum of the main dome, and the moulded brick string courses and sunk panels on the drums of the cupolas. “In each wall-face a pointed archway has been set, and there are the remains of fluting and arcading in the tall drums of the domes, while the inner doorway seems to have been an attempt at a rare type of horse-shoe arch. The design and execution of this tomb indicate that it was the production of men accustomed to working in brick masonry, and in a method implying Persian influence.”<sup>2</sup> Nor is there anything in its design to indicate that the old stone architecture of the Hindus exerted

1 Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1906-7, p.161.

2 Percy Brown, *Indian Architecture (Islamic Period)*, p. 87.



any appreciable influence upon its typically Saracenic style, beyond contributing some of the materials for its building.

Of mixed construction also are the stone mosque at Bijbihara and the Jama Masjid at Pampur, only the basement of the latter being composed of an old stone temple, the upper portion being in the wood and brick mode, characteristic of the medieval wooden architecture.

"From these small series of examples", observes Percy Brown, "it seems fairly obvious that an attempt to convert the Islamic architecture of Kashmir into a form of provincialized Persian, in the face of the firmly established indigenous timber tradition, could not be maintained."<sup>1</sup>

#### MEDIEVAL WOODEN ARCHITECTURE

The technique of the famous wooden architecture of Kashmir consists of laying one log horizontally on another, usually crosswise in the form of "headers and stretchers" as in brick-work. Not only the walls, but also piers for the support of any superstructure were erected in this fashion. For pillars single tree trunks were generally employed, a whole forest being, for instance, transferred from the hill slopes to the aisles of the Jama Masjid at Srinagar. The simplest use of this cantilever building method was evident in the old bridges which spanned the Jhelum in Srinagar. The first permanent bridge built by Zain-ul-abidin was named after him, Zaina Kadal. The piers built on the cantilever system comprised layers of logs piled crosswise upon one another with stones intersticed between each layer. The whole looked like an inverted pyramid with its truncated apex resting on a solidly built masonry cutwater. The piers were thus sufficiently strong to withstand a reasonably strong flood current below and a sufficiently heavy load above.

It was on this system that most of the wooden buildings were constructed during the medieval period and after. The logs were here neatly squared and the space between each course filled up with brick-work or glazed tiles. There is no attempt at dovetailing the panels or even the courses of logs, the chief fastening device being a roughly made wooden pin. With the superabundance of building-timber in the form of deodar (*Cedrus Deodara*) available in the Valley, the medieval carpenter made no attempt at devising light struts, trusses or diagonal members to secure lateral rigidity. Consequently it is a system of a dead weight bearing directly downwards, on much the same principle as in the older stone temples.

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1 *Ibid.*, p. 88.

The most telling characteristic of the Islamic architecture of Kashmir is the treatment of the roof, with its projecting eaves, supported on long rows of brackets and adorned with beautifully carved pendants at the corners; with its layers of earth over birch-bark sheets to make the roof water-tight; and crowning all its tall and graceful steeple. To add dignity and grace to the building, the clever carpenter supplied the elaborately designed tracery in window screens and balustrades, the magnificent pillars of deodar in the larger halls and the charming *Khatamband* ceilings.

#### KHANAQAH OF SHAH HAMADAN

A typical example in the medieval wooden style of architecture is the *Khanaqah* of Shah Hamadan in Srinagar. Originally built in 1395 in the reign of Sultan Sikandar to commemorate the visit to Kashmir of Mir Sayyid Ali Hamadani, popularly known as Shah Hamadan, the building was twice destroyed by fire, in 1479 and 1731. The present mosque was rebuilt by Abul Barkat Khan in 1732 and has stood since then with occasional repairs. Standing on the right bank of the Jhelum, this building with its surroundings and background of distant sunny mountains presents an enchanting spectacle.

The pyramidal roof is broken into three equal portions ending in a graceful steeple, 125 feet from the ground with the gilt umbrella and other ornaments at the top. The four corners of the roof are adorned with wooden tassels. Massive beams of deodar intersticed with bricks, form the walls, relieved by well proportioned balconies in the upper storey, the floor and roof of which are supported by light and elegantly carved wooden pillars. Besides, there are arcades, verandahs, and porticos, with their openings filled with lattice work (*pinjra*) and enriched with carved wooden insertions.

The interior consists of a large hall, 63 feet by 43 feet, with fourteen chambers or cells on its northern and southern sides. The walls are covered entirely with wooden panels of geometrical designs and the ceiling is supported in the centre by four wooden columns ornamented with wooden pieces in fish-bone pattern.

#### JAMA MASJID IN SRINAGAR

But an outstanding and impressive and also an "architectural" building in the wooden style of Kashmir is the Jama Masjid at Srinagar. Originally built by Sultan Sikandar as early as 1400 A.D. and enlarged by his son, Sultan Zain-ul-abidin, the mosque with "four doors on the four sides and four high minarets rising to the sky and

decorated with wonderful sculptures,"<sup>1</sup> has passed through many vicissitudes. It was destroyed by fire during the reign of Sultan Hassan Shah (1472-84 A.D.) who took up the work of its reconstruction. It was completed after his death by the commander-in-chief, Ibrahim Magrey. During Jehangir's reign the mosque again caught fire and the emperor who was then in Srinagar, himself took part in fighting the flames. Subsequently he entrusted the reconstruction of the mosque to Malik Haider Chaudura, the historian-architect of Kashmir. The mosque again caught fire in 1674 during the reign of Aurangzeb. The present construction is the restored mosque by Aurangzeb, the plan however being that of Sultan Sikandar's original construction. Having fallen into disrepair the mosque was extensively restored recently. In its design this huge structure contains all the essential components of the Kashmir type of wooden building, but so disposed as to form a conception approaching more nearly to that of the orthodox mosque plan with four *aiwans* arranged crosswise and inter-connected by naves of huge wooden pillars.

Roughly square in shape, its northern and southern sides are 384 feet long. A larger Gothic arch opens from the patio on to the principal altar, over which the steepled roof is much higher than elsewhere. Three more pagoda-shaped steeples in the middle of each cloister serve as minarets from which the *muezzin* calls the faithful to prayer. The roof of the four surrounding cloisters, each 360 feet long, is supported by two rows of pillars, numbering 378. The pillars under the domes and spires are more than 40 feet high, while those under the main building measure above 21 feet in height. The rows of straight deodar pillars lend an air of grandeur to the interior of the mosque. It looks like a forest trimmed and transplanted from the mountain side to its present position.

The medieval wooden architecture of Kashmir is also represented in the numerous mosques dotting the Valley. The *Ziarat* at Aishmuqam, perched on the scarp of a hill 500 feet above the Pahalgam road was built in memory of Baba Zain-ud-din, one of the four disciples of Sheikh Nur-ud-din. The mosque is noteworthy for its beautiful lattice-work and decorative panels. The mosque at Tsrar Sharif built in honour of the patron-saint of Kashmir, Sheikh Nur-ud-din, is a large oblong building with a wing at either end, and is built of hewn logs placed transversely, course upon course, on a plinth of brick masonry. The central hall measures 80 feet by 60 feet, the elevation being about 30 feet. The roof which rises in tiers is supported by four pillars.

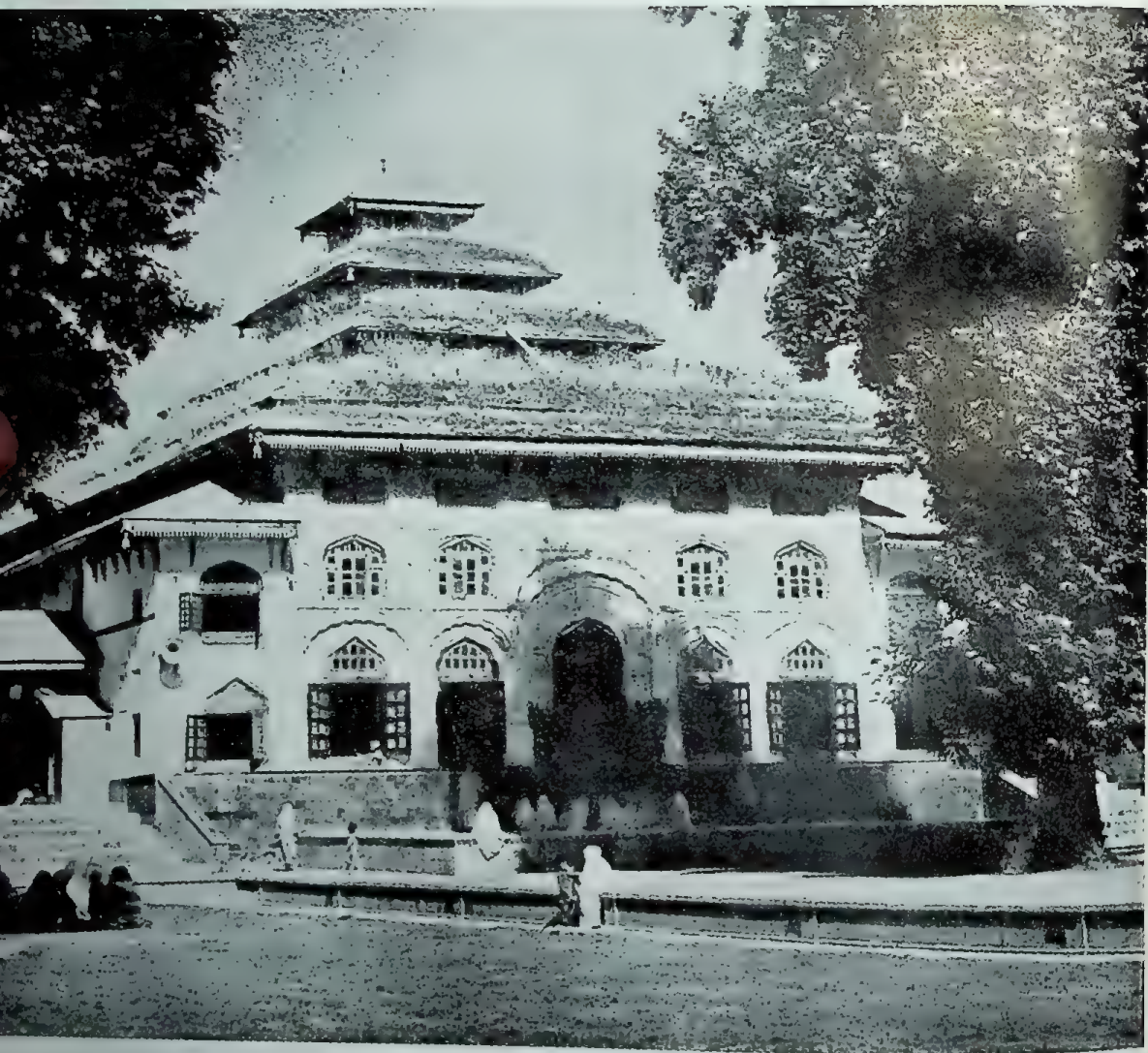
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1 Srivara, p. 236.





Jamma Masjid at Srinagar



Hazratbal mosque where the Holy Relic is enshrined



Another typical mosque built in the traditional mode of architecture is the one at Shopyan, 29 miles south of Srinagar. The general outline is that of a Chinese pagoda, but the Saracenic influence is noticeable in its arches and cornices, windows and doors, which have rich lattice worked panels.

#### PINJRA OR LATTICE-WORK

The *pinjra* or lattice work of Kashmir is now a forgotten art. Built up of minute laths arranged in geometric forms so as to display their edges, the *pinjra* panel is held in position by the pressure the laths exert one against the other, by certain main lines being dowelled together and by the frame of the panel within which they are assorted. They are rarely if ever glued together and in good work are so accurately fitted and balanced that they do not fall to pieces even when the frame is removed.

The *pinjra* has a history of its own. There is a belief that the carpenters of Kashmir copied it from the Chalukian sculptors and stone masons. But since there is no trace of any specimens earlier than the Mughal period, it is difficult to say with certainty where the art originated. No doubt the Saracenic influence which predominated during and after the reign of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin in the arts and crafts of Kashmir, had a lot to do in the designing and manufacture of *pinjra* panels.

Many designs were produced, the favourite ones being the "rising sun" and the "cobweb". The uses to which the *pinjra* panels were put appear to have been varied. Windows, doors, railings, ventilators, ornamental screens and partitions were all done in *pinjra* work. Pasted with thick hand-made paper with an oil-daub in the centre of each, the *pinjra* panels shut off the chill blast of winter wind, but let in enough light through the translucent oily paper.

#### MUGHAL ARCHITECTURE

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Mughal emperors and their courtiers made an effort to revive the art of stone building in Kashmir, not however in its ancient form, but according to the style in vogue in Agra and Delhi. But Kashmiris had by then completely lost the art of handling stones and Akbar who constructed a fort round the Hari Parbat hill to enclose his newly founded city, had to import "two hundred Indian master builders" to carry out his project, as the local artisans appear to have been only accustomed to working in wood. This fort which was built during Akbar's third visit to Kashmir in May 1597, is nearly three miles in circumference, and is now in the main



part in ruins. Architecturally there is nothing noteworthy about it, except perhaps the main gateway, Kathi Darwaza, which is still intact. It is a simple structure comprising a domed chamber in the middle with two side recesses. Its only external decorations are rectangular and arched panels, and two beautiful medallions in high relief. Another gateway facing west, the Sangin Darwaza, is more expansive and ornate, its elevation consisting of a well-proportioned arched recess containing the entrance gateway, and elegant oriel windows on each side.

#### PATHAR MASJID

The two other stone buildings of Mughal workmanship are of a slightly later date. The Pathar Masjid, situated on the left bank of the river Jhelum and nearly opposite the Shah Hamadan mosque, is the largest surviving Mughal building in Kashmir. Built of polished grey limestone, its interior is divided into three passages by two rows of massive stone arches which extend from one end to another, the roof of the compartments between them being handsomely ribbed and vaulted. The facade consists of nine arches including the large one in the centre. The mosque was built by Nur Jehan in 1620, but did not become popular on account of the insulting remark of the queen who when asked the cost of construction, replied, pointing to her jewel-studded slipper, "as much as this". The construction was supervised by the well-known historian-architect of Kashmir, Malik Haider Chaudura.

#### MOSQUE AT HAZARATBAL

The mosque at Hazaratbal on the western bank of the Dal lake, has acquired special sanctity for its being the repository of a sacred hair of the Prophet. The mosque was originally built by Shah Jehan and depicts a curious blend of the Mughal and Kashmirian architecture. The walls and the portico are built in brick masonry, resting on a plinth of dressed stone. The roof in three tiers follows the traditional style of Islamic architecture of Kashmir.

How the sacred relic came to Kashmir is an interesting story in itself. Originally it passed on to the descendants of the Holy Prophet, from father to son till it reached Sayyid Abdullah, the *mutawali* of the Prophet's shrine in Medina. In the year 1634 A.D., the Sayyid left for India with his family and arrived at Bijapur (Deccan) two years later. He was granted a Jagir by the ruler there and he stayed on for 23 years. On his death the sacred relic passed to his son, Sayyid Hamid. The latter continued to live in Bijapur and when the kingdom was conquered by Aurangzeb in 1692 A.D., Sayyid Hamid went to Jehanabad to get his Jagir restored.

During those days a Kashmiri trader, named Khwaja Nur-ud-din Ashawari, was carrying on a prosperous business at Jehanabad, and Sayyid Hamid being in distress sought his help. The Khwaja readily gave him the money and requested him to let him have the sacred relic. The request was promptly turned down, but the same night the Sayyid was directed in a dream by the Holy Prophet to hand over the hair relic to Khwaja Nur-ud-din.

Khwaja Nur-ud-din Ashawari left for Kashmir with the relic but at Lahore he was detained by Aurangzeb who wanted to keep the sacred relic at Ajmer. The Khwaja was deeply shocked at being relieved of the relic and he died at Lahore, expressing the last wish to a friend, Khwaja Medanish, that should he succeed in getting back the relic, it should be taken to Kashmir and lodged there at a suitable place. Aurangzeb too was directed in a dream by the Prophet to hand over the relic to Khwaja Medanish, who carried it to Kashmir where, in the words of Khwaja Azam, an eye-witness "there was great enthusiasm among the people who rushed like a stream in flood to pay their homage to the holy relic." After being kept for some time in the *Khanaqah* of Naqshband, it was finally lodged in the mosque built already by Shah Jehan at Hazaratbal. The body of Khwaja Nur-ud-din was also buried near the *Ziarat*.

#### MOSQUE OF AKHUND MULLA SHAH

Akbar's fort at Hari Parbat and Nur Jehan's Pathar Masjid in Srinagar depict the Mughal provincial style of architecture in its temperate manner, being broadly treated with the minimum amount of decoration, but at the same time avoiding undue severity. The small mosque of Akhund Mulla Shah which stands on the scarp of the Hari Parbat hill, depicts these qualities in a more pronounced manner. Its plan is singular, the design of the prayer chamber being repeated on the east side of the courtyard which forms the gateway. On the north and south are arcades, treated in the same way as the wings of the prayer chamber. The somewhat cramped courtyard may be accounted for by the slope of the hill on which it stands, and the difficulty which would have been experienced in making the prayer chamber wider. The stone lotus finial over the pulpit is the only surviving example of its kind in Kashmir. "Constructed of grey granite slabs over a core of brickwork", notices Percy Brown, "the proportions of this building, the simplicity of its surface treatment, its architectural character and manipulation generally, are all most commendable. Particularly noticeable are the archways whether plain, pointed or engrailed, as they are singularly graceful in their curves,

while the scheme of the back wall exterior, with a projection to mark the recessed *Mihrab* in the interior is well conceived. In many respects this ruined and neglected structure is a model in miniature of an appropriate mosque composition.”<sup>1</sup>

In addition to the three mosques, and the fort, there are other, structural records of the Mughals, mainly in brick masonry, some of these being sumptuous summer resorts, like the “Pari Mahal” on the Zaberwan hill overlooking the Dal lake, and the numerous *Serais* or resting places on the Mughal roads over the Pir Panjal and Jhelum Valley passes. Though interesting in its arrangement of terraces, the Pari Mahal is of no special architectural significance having perhaps been hastily constructed by Dara Shikoh to house his school of Sufism and observatory.

#### GARDEN TRADITIONS

The conspicuous contribution by the Mughals to the architectural wealth of Kashmir lies in the large number of gardens with their schemes of fountains and cascades which they built at several beauty spots in the Valley.

These gardens are famous throughout the world. Tom More in his immortal *Lalla Rookh* has painted some of these in colours so brilliant as to leave a lasting impression on the reader. The history of the development of garden designs in Kashmir is, however, closely associated with Buddhist landscape gardening in China and Japan.

From very early times flowers and plants have been admired and cultivated in India. There are many references to gardens in old Buddhist literature and Sanskrit plays. In section CCIX of the *Adi Parva* and section III of the *Sabha Parva* of the *Mahabharata*, minute descriptions of gardens as laid out by the architect Maya are given. The sacred groves round Buddhist shrines were also among the early forms of Indian gardening.

The ancient Indian, like the Chinese, preferred still, lotus-bearing waters, pent up within paved embankments. Pleasure houses and trees crowding the garden were additions of later times. No attempt was made at ensuring running water or *ab-i-rawan* simply because in both the countries water was plentiful and rivers abounded.

Kashmir which has been endowed with an abundance of springs, lakes, glens and mountains and all kinds of beautiful flowers, is really Nature's own garden requiring no human hand to improve upon. Numerous sites can easily be found which are symptomatic of the Hindu

1 Percy Brown. *Op. Cit.*, p. 88.



conception of landscape gardening. Siva, the water diviner, always on the prowl in the hills and helping in releasing pent-up waters for the fertilisation of the cultivated area, is the presiding deity of Kashmir. It was He who cut open the pent-up waters of the primeval lake in the Valley near Baramula. And thus wherever a hill came down gently sloping to a water reservoir or wherever there was a spring gushing out cool and nectarlike water, the area was utilised by the early Hindus in laying out a landscape garden.

With the propagation of the Buddhist doctrine the lotus received a new significance. What the *Mihrab* (Alah is a spirit, invisible, intangible) is to the Muhammadan or the Cross of Redemption to the Christian, the Lotus is to the Buddhist and the Hindu. A lotus floating on the Cosmic Waters is the symbol of the creation of the world. The Buddhist and Hindu missionaries with their wide sympathies and their simple joyous love of nature travelled far and wide and wherever they went they carried the garden traditions with them. The cultivation of flowers was a religious compulsion—one had to make the early morning offering of flowers at the feet of the deity. The flowery tablelands and valleys of Central Asia from which originally the Vedic Aryans had come to India, furnished a fertile soil later for laying out of gardens by the missionaries round the Buddhist shrines and monasteries. Sir Aurel Stein in his account of the journey to the sand-buried cities of Khotan often mentions the gardens which formed pleasant camping grounds all along his route from Kashmir to Khotan. At Yarkand the garden reserved for him, the Chini Bagh (Chinese Garden), "proved quite a summer palace within a large walled-in garden." Ponds filled with the sacred lotus flowers figured largely in many fresco paintings uncovered among the ruined cities north of Khotan, and adjoining one of the buried houses, the outlines of an ancient garden were distinctly traceable.

"In view of this pictorial representation," says Sir Aurel, "I feel convinced that already ancient Khotan had known the graceful lotus plant dear to the gods of India. Considering the close historical connections between Kashmir and Khotan which the local traditions recorded by Yuan Chwang indicate, it needs no effort of imagination to believe that the lotuses that once adorned the gardens of settlements now buried by the desert sand were originally derived from the great Himalayan Valley, on the lakes of which I had so often admired them."

Farther and farther as the Kashmirian monks and scholars penetrated into China they carried with them the traditions of gardening till the whole of China and Japan came under their influence. We learn

from the Chinese Annals that Dharmamitra, a Kashmiri Buddhist monk who went to China early in the 5th century, founded a *vihara* at Tunghuang and planted more than one thousand trees around it. The Indian Buddhist garden, although forgotten in the land of its birth, still survives in China and Japan, transformed and tinged by the genius of another climate and another people.

In Central Asia and Persia this garden tradition took a different shape under the Muslim rule. The first condition was always the running, life-giving water. The river of life was reproduced by directing the water flow through paved channels to a central reservoir. Artificial cascades and a scheme of fountains in the garden design were introduced and thus was created the emblem of immortality and youth, the never-ending water and the ever renewed tree. Here was *firdaus* or garden or paradise which are synonymous.

The Mughals from Babar to Shah Jehan were great lovers of gardens. They reintroduced the old Indian art from their northern homeland. Babar had imbibed the taste for garden designs in Samarkand and Ferghana where the old Indian gardens had undergone the changes mentioned. The Mughal gardens in India are thus actually copied from the gardens of Turkistan and Persia. Akbar who first brought Kashmir under his sway found the place resembling his original home in Turkistan and at once set about laying out a garden. Jehangir and his art-minded Nur Jehan excelled all others in laying out gardens in Kashmir. To them we owe the world-famous Nashat, Shalamar, Achhabal and Verinag. Shah Jehan improved upon these, adding to Shalamar a few terraces. It is said that there were 700 Mughal gardens round the Dal lake which have now disappeared as a result of the uncertain and troubled days which followed the Mughal rule in Kashmir. But this tradition never appeared exotic in a milieu where the Kashmiri garden traditions existed before. The outward body may be Turkistani but the inner soul is Kashmiri. Kashmir thus re-embraced an art which had been carried by her sons in ancient times to countries far to the east and north.

#### SHALAMAR

The best example of the existence of a garden tradition in Kashmir from ancient times, is provided by the famous Shalamar on the Dal where as early as the time of king Pravarsena II, the founder of Srinagar, there is said to have been a villa called Mar-shala or the "Hall of Love."<sup>1</sup> The king used to visit a saint named Sukram Swami living near Harwan and rested at this garden villa on his way to or from that

<sup>1</sup> Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals*, p. 162.

place. In course of time this villa vanished and the village that had sprung up in its neighbourhood was called Shalamar after the name of the villa.

In 1619 Jehangir laid out a garden at this spot calling it "Farah-bakhsh" or "Delightful". Eleven years later Zaffar Khan, a governor of Kashmir during Shah Jehan's reign, made an extension to this garden, calling the addition by "Faiz-bakhsh" or "Bountiful".<sup>1</sup>

The design of Shalamar is typically Mughal—rectangular in shape, the area being divided into a series of smaller square parterres. In all their gardens from Agra to Kashmir we find "the water running in trim stone-or-brick-edged canal down the whole length, falling from level to level in smooth cascades or rushing in tumult of white foam over carved water shutes. Below many of these waterfalls the canal flows into a larger or smaller tank, usually studded with numerous small fountains." There are shady walks and lawns with chenars in the centre and beds of flowers on either side of the canal and round water tanks.

The Shalamar is arranged in four terraces rising one above the other and of nearly equal dimensions. There is a line of tanks or reservoirs along the middle of the whole length of the garden and these are connected by a canal, 18 inches deep and from 9 to 14 yards wide. The tanks and the canal with their scheme of fountains and cascades, are lined with polished limestone, resembling black marble. The water to feed these is obtained from the Harwan stream behind the garden; it enters at the upper end; flows down from each successive terrace, in beautiful stone chutes, carved in many ingenious patterns of shell and fish, which lead to the reservoir below containing numerous fountains, and after leaving the garden, falls into the outer canal by which it is conducted to the lake.

The fourth terrace was the private portion of the garden where the ladies of the harem resided and where they stayed in the palmy days of the Mughal emperors. It contains, in its centre, a magnificent black stone pavilion which is raised upon a platform a little more than three feet high and 65 feet square. Its sloping roof is about 20 feet high and is supported, on each side, by a row of six elaborately carved black marble pillars, which are of polygonal shape and fluted. It was used as a banqueting hall, a favourite place for entertainments of various kinds. The effect must have been exceedingly pretty, when at night the fountains played and the canal and its cascades ran merrily, the pavilion and the garden being lit up with various coloured lamps,

1 Pandit Anand Koul, *Archaeological Remains in Kashmir*.



shedding their light upon the throng of gaudily-dressed and jewel-bedecked guests.

The pavilion is surrounded by a fine reservoir, which is 52 yards square and about  $3\frac{1}{2}$  feet deep. It is lined with stone and contains 140 large fountains. Upon each side of the terrace, built against the wall, there is also a lodge. These formed the private dwellings of the royal family. On the edge of each of the three lower terraces there is also a small pavilion which overlooks the fountains in the tank below. Each of these consist of two apartments on the side of the canal, over which is a covered archway uniting the two, and that of the lowest is supported by 16 black stone pillars which are fluted and of polygonal in shape.

It was in this garden that Jehangir had the intense delight of making up the quarrel he had with his Nur Jehan "the Light of the World". The poet Moore has immortalized the scene, which he closes thus :

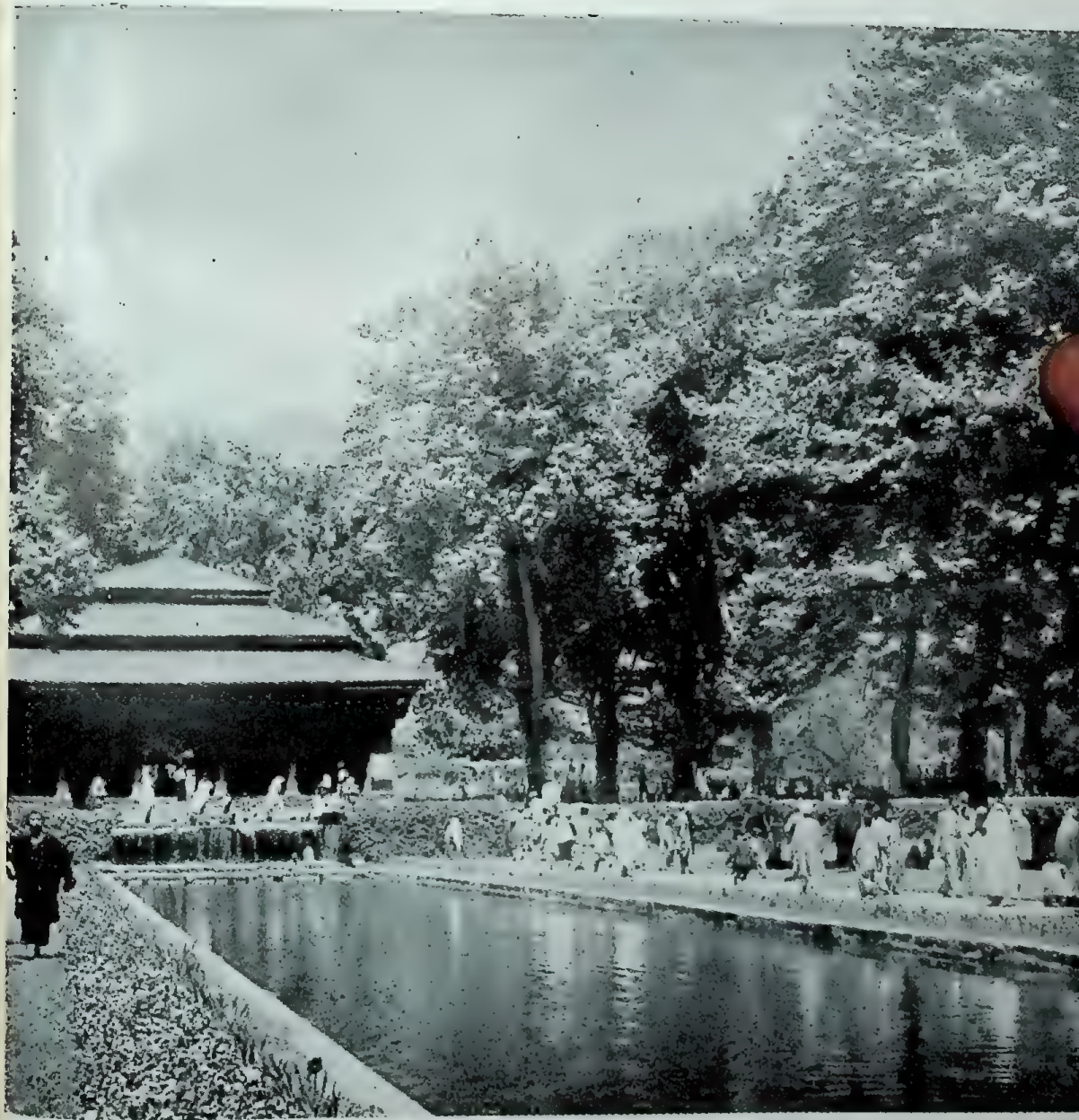
And well do vanished frowns enhance,  
The charms of every brightened glance,  
And dearer seems each dawning smile,  
For having lost its light awhile :  
And happier now for all her sights,  
As on his arm her head reposes,  
She whispers him with laughing eyes,  
"Remember, love, the feast of roses."

What changes have occurred since the time when Jehangir and Nur Jehan cast aside the cares of state and, forgetting the petty intrigues of court, roamed on the lawns of this garden ! They planted, but never lived to see the full perfection of the stately chenar trees. Others have entered into their labour. Man has done much for these royal gardens, but Nature more, and it is where man has attempted least that he has succeeded best.

#### NASHAT BAGH OR THE "GARDEN OF BLISS"

Laid out by Asaf Khan, brother of Nur Jehan, queen of Jehangir, the Nashat is situated two miles to the south of the Shalamar, and commands a magnificent view of the Dal lake and snow-capped mountains to the far west of the Valley.

In 1633 A.D. this garden was visited by Shah Jehan. Finding it to be better in point of scenery than the Shalamar, he said to Asaf Khan thrice that it was a delightful garden, expecting the latter to reply that it might be accepted by the emperor as his own. But Asaf Khan kept silent and this inwardly displeased the emperor. The garden was, as it



Shalamar Garden, Kashmir





Nishat Bagh on the Dal lake



is now, supplied with water from the same stream which fed the shalamar, and the emperor, in his anger, ordered that as the water-course belonged exclusively to the Shalamar, no water should run to any other garden from it. This at once deprived the Nashat of all its beauty. Asaf Khan who was staying in the garden, felt very sad but, of course, could do nothing. One day, observing the desolate look the garden wore for want of water, he felt exceedingly grieved, and, throwing himself on his back in a corner, heaved deep sighs, and in this melancholy mood fell asleep. A servant of his knowing the cause of the grief that weighed upon him, went to the place where the stream had been blocked up and, removing the blockade, brought water to the garden. At once did the fountains begin to play and the cascades to make a pleasing noise, and this awakened Asaf Khan. He enquired, in surprise, how the water had come, and got much alarmed lest the emperor might hear of this and get annoyed. His servant stood up before him and told him that as he had seen him in sorrow for want of water in the garden, he could not bear it and, therefore, he had secretly removed the blockage from the stream. Asaf Khan upbraided him for having done so, and hastily got the stream closed up again. The news reached the ears of the emperor and he summoned the man who had committed the offence. The poor man, trembling with fear, pleaded guilty and stated, with folded hands, that he had done this because he could not stand the sorrow of his master, caused for want of water in his garden, and that he would submit to any punishment His Imperial Majesty might award him for this offence. To the surprise and delight of all, the emperor admiring the devotion of the faithful servant, bestowed a robe of honour upon him and, besides, gave Asaf Khan a *sanad*, granting him the right of drawing water from the Shalamar stream for the Nashat Bagh.

The Nashat is arranged in ten terraces, three of which are much higher than the others. There is a line of tanks along the centre of the whole garden and these are connected by a canal about 13 feet wide and eight inches deep. The tanks and the canal are lined with polished stone. The beauty of flower-beds, with the pleasing lines of their design, is enhanced by numerous fountain jets. The stream, which feeds it enters the garden at the upper end and flows down the successive terraces in cascades formed by inclined walls of masonry covered with stone slabs beautifully scalloped to vary the appearance of the water.

There are two principal pavilions, one at the lower and the other at the upper end of the garden. The lower pavilion is double-storeyed and built of wood and plaster upon a foundation of stones. In the middle there is a reservoir about 14 feet square and three feet deep with a few fountains.

The upper storey has a lofty corridor on its eastern and western sides. On its northern side, there is an apartment, enclosed by lattice work, and, on the south-side, there is also a similar but smaller apartment. An opening in the middle of the floor, about 27 feet square commands a view of the fountains in the reservoir below. In front of this pavilion and upon the terrace below it, there is a large tank filled with fountains.

The upper pavilion is situated at the end of the highest terrace and from there the whole lay-out of the garden emerges into view.

Giant plane trees (*chenars*) shade the walks, which are bordered by lines of cypresses, and all around is soft, green turf, studded with flowerbeds. Lofty crags rise for thousands of feet precipitously above the garden, while in the opposite direction a white, soft expanse of lake and village-dotted plain attract the eye. The best time to spend in this lovely garden is the morning when the radiance of the early dawn kisses the silvery dews with which the whole area is bathed, and when it is shady in the garden and the lake far below is glittering with the light of the sun. The poet has truly said :

*Subah dar Bagh-i-Nashat o sham dar Bagh-i-Nasim  
Shalamar o lala zar o sair-i-Kashmir as to bas*

"Morning at the Nashat Bagh and evening at the Nasim. Shalamar and tulip fields—these are the places of excursion in Kashmir, and none else."

#### CHASHMA SHAHI

Chashma Shahi, the famous spring of pure, sparkling and cool water, attracts people from far and near. Its situation on the slope of the Zebwan hill commands a superb view of the lotus on the Dal below, and of the verdant vale across. The spot could not, therefore, escape the artistic eye of the Mughals. Under orders of the emperor Shah Jehan a small garden on the traditional Mughal pattern was laid out here by the governor, Ali Mardan Khan, in 1642 A.D. There are three terraces, and the central aqueduct, tanks, waterfalls and fountains, are fed by the sparkling waters gushing out of the spring at the south end of the garden. The main aqueduct passes through the ground floor of a central pavilion and after feeding a small round reservoir, falls to the lower terrace in a fine cascade about sixteen feet high.

#### NASIM BAGH

Across the Dal on its western shore lies the Nasim Bagh, the "Garden of Breezes," laid out by the emperor Shah Jehan. Containing

hundreds of magnificent shady chenars (1,200 had been originally planted) which when saplings were, it is said, watered with milk—"this park lies open—a beautiful and ancient woodland—through which the lake breezes blow, making it the very abode of serene and tranquil peace, while its white-iris clusters lend it an almost feminine charm."<sup>1</sup>

#### CHAR CHENAR

Just in front of the garden lies the island of Char Chenar so named because it has four chenars on each of the cardinal points. A garden was laid out here by prince Murad in 1641 A.D., when he was governor of Kashmir. This delightful and favourite resort used to be thronged on hot summer days by picnic parties going on the Dal lake in boats, which they tied up here in order to refresh themselves under the cool and breezy shade of the chenars. To others, given to merriment, this corner was a place of gaiety, dancing and laughter—a very riot of materialism with its flower battles and all the brave music of the sensuous life. Still, to others with a religious turn of mind, it was a peaceful spot to linger at for the contemplation of the great mysteries of life, their fingers turning rosaries, their lips in prayer.

The Mughals extended the plantation of chenars. It was Jehangir who systematically planned the *char chenar* or a chenar at each of the four cardinal points, so that at whichever point the sun might be, one could recline in the shade of a chenar in the grove. They planted chenars in gardens, on the shores of the lakes, on the roadside and in the fields. Truly was it called the "Royal Tree", for it could not be cut without the permission of the authorities. It was in fact the property of the State and the amount realized from the sale of its timber used to go into the State treasury.

Even Aurangzeb with his austere and puritanic habits had developed a love for the chenar. When the news of the devastating fire in Srinagar in 1674 A.D. in which the Jama Masjid was burnt down, was conveyed to him, he anxiously enquired whether the chenars in its compound were safe. "The mosque can be rebuilt in a short time," he observed, "but a fully grown chenar could not be quickly replaced,"

It is widely believed that the chenar was first introduced in Kashmir by Akbar. But the fact that the Kashmiris call it "Bhuni", a corruption of Sanskrit "Bhawani," Blissful Mother, shows that it was found in the Valley from earlier times. *Akbarnama* mentions that Akbar took thirtyfour people inside the hollow trunk of an aged chenar tree. Jehangir, too, in his *Memoirs*, makes mention of a huge chenar in the hollow

1 V. C. Scott O'Connor, *The Charm of Kashmir*.



trunk of which he and his seven companions with their horses could be comfortably accommodated. Evidently the trees must have been several hundred years old.

The tree is known for the huge girth of its trunk, the maximum circumference attained in Kashmir being 55 feet by a chenar in the old Mughal garden at Bijbihara, 28 miles from Srinagar on the Srinagar-Jammu road. The chenar grows all over the Valley, every village, garden and field has its quota of the "royal tree." It offers welcome, cool shade in summer. The Kashmiris believe that resting under a chenar for an hour increases the quantity of blood in a human being by as much as 10 *rattis*.

In Kashmir the chenar decorates cottages and palaces. The chenar motif is to be found on nearly all artistic goods manufactured in the Valley. In fact the chenar is in the mind of every artisan and designer. It has well been said, "Take away its chenar and the beauty of Kashmir is gone."

It is not within the scope of the present work to give an exhaustive treatment of all the extant Mughal gardens of Kashmir. Pandit Anand Koul mentions that there were during the Mughal times as many as seven hundred of them round the Dal alone.<sup>1</sup> We may, however, notice two which are important for the beautiful setting in which they have been laid out.

#### ACHHABAL

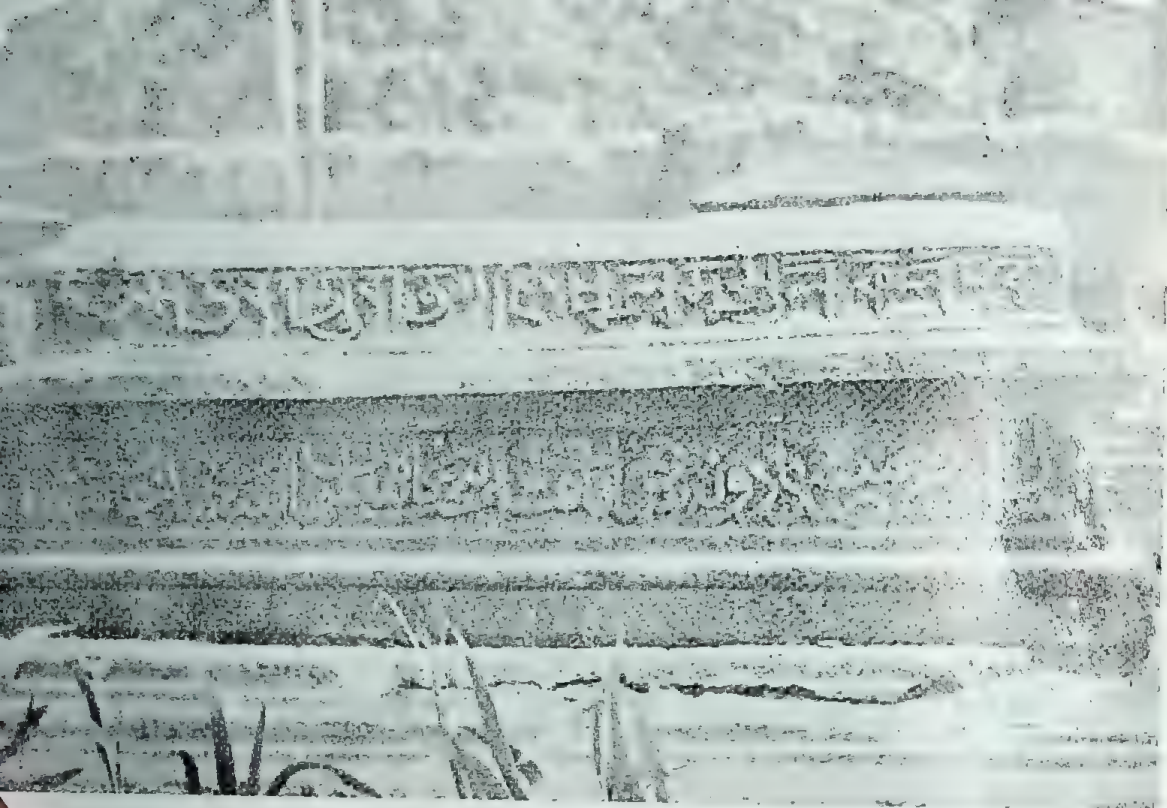
Noted for its spring, one of the finest in Kashmir, the beauty spot of Achhabal, 40 miles to the south of Srinagar, was selected by Jehan Ara, the daughter of Shah Jehan, to lay her garden at in 1620 A. D., for it afforded an opportunity for man's hand to lend help to Nature. Called "Begamabad", the garden, 467 feet long and 450 feet in breadth is divided into two portions. The water of the spring issues from several places near the foot of a low spur which is densely covered with deodar trees. At one place the oblique fissure from which the water gushes out, is large enough to admit a man's body. The water of the spring flows through the garden, which is traversed by three aqueducts, the central one being about 16 feet, and those on each side about 7 feet wide. Along the central aqueduct, there are two large tanks. A wooden pavilion, which is about 18 feet square rests upon a platform of masonry. There are three waterfalls in the upper part of the garden and three outside its lower end. The tanks and aqueducts are lined with stone, and a large number of fountains have been laid in them.

<sup>1</sup> Koul, *Archaeological Remains in Kashmir*.

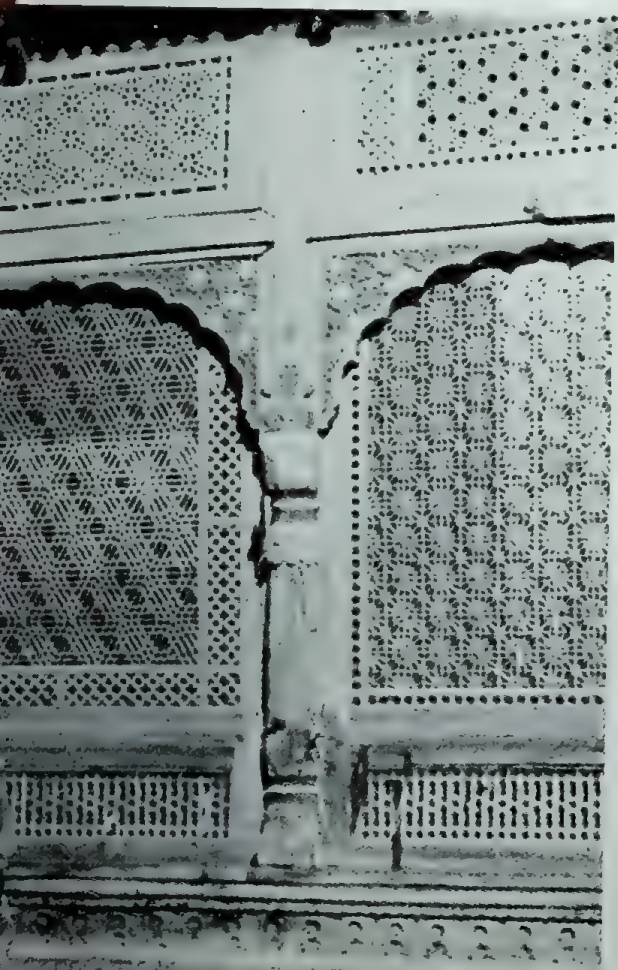


Chashma Shahi Garden





A fifteenth century tomb-stone  
in Srinagar bearing inscriptions  
in Arabic and Sanskrit scripts.



Kashmiri wooden lattice work  
in an old mosque in  
Srinagar.



## VERINAG

Verinag is a village situated at the foot of the Banihal pass. It is called after the name of a spring there known as Verinag. According to a legend the goddess Vitasta (Jhelum) wanted to take her rise from this place, but it happened that when she came, Siva was staying there, whereupon she had to go back and then she took her rise from Vithavatur (Vitastatra), a spring about a mile to the north-west of this place. *Virah* in Sanskrit means to 'go back' and *nag* 'spring' and, as Vitasta had to go back from this place, it came to be called Virahnag or Verinag.

This spring was originally an irregular, shapeless pond, and water, oozing out from different places in it, spread about and formed a little marsh. The emperor Jehangir, whose artistic taste for polishing up the beauty of Nature is well known, saw this and at once determined to improve it. He built the octagonal tank of sculptured stones round it, so that all the water issuing from north-eastern side of the wooded hill was collected therein. This was completed in 1029 Hijra or 1620 A. D.

Seven years later, Jehangir's son, Shah Jehan, who was no less a lover of natural beauty, constructed cascades and aqueducts in straight lines through and around a fine garden which he, in order to enhance further the beauty of the place, laid out in front of the spring. He also built cold and hot baths to the east of this garden, just outside of it, of which little trace is now left.

There are two stone slabs built into the southern and western walls of the spring, on which are inscribed passages in Persian prose and verse, in praise of the spring, and the dates of the construction of the tank and aqueduct.

This broad survey of the medieval architecture of Kashmir shows that as in religion, philosophy and literature, so in architecture as well, there has been an endeavour to effect a synthesis of varied trends and influences. How happily the Kashmiri builder has succeeded in his efforts is evident from the numerous buildings and gardens dotting the Valley, which are even now objects of beauty and admiration. "Differently conditioned though the Kashmir architecture was", observes Marshall, "fashioned out of dissimilar materials and cast in a mould unlike that of any other school, it would hardly have been surprising if its development had proceeded on radically different lines. That it did not do so ; that it exhibits, on the contrary, precisely the same fusion of Hindu and Muslim ideals, the same happy blend of elegance and strength, is eloquent testimony to the enduring vitality of Hindu

art under an alien rule and to the wonderful capacity of the Muslim for absorbing that art into his own and endowing it with a new and greater spirit.”<sup>1</sup>

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1 *The Cambridge History of India*, Vol. III, p. 640.

PART THREE

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MODERN KASHMIR

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UNDER THE SIKHS

[ 1819—1846 ]

THE DOGRA REGIME

[ 1846—1947 ]

IN FREE INDIA

[ 1947 and After ]





## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### KASHMIR UNDER THE SIKHS

THE DAWN of the nineteenth century witnessed the emergence of Kashmir as a vital frontier region of India. The fame of its scenic beauty and rich cultural heritage had already spread to distant corners of the world, but with the rapid advance of the British Indian empire to the north ; the amazing growth of power and expansion of Tzarist Russia in Asia ; and the extension of the Chinese borders to Sinkiang, Kashmir acquired a unique importance as the place where the three great empires met. Soon it became a centre of activity of various foreign agents engaged in collecting information on its geography, administrative set-up and defence. With the advance of the century, the course of Kashmir history was increasingly affected by the political situation prevailing on both sides of the Karakoram, as well as by the relations existing between the British Indian Government and Maharaja Ranjit Singh and his successors. To the misfortune of the people of the State these and similar international developments—the concomitants of its geographical situation—persisted to influence the course of political history of Kashmir even after it was incorporated in the Sikh kingdom or later when it became a princely state of British India. They have certainly not ceased to do so even to the present day.

#### KASHMIR'S STRATEGIC IMPORTANCE

The first realisation of Kashmir's strategic importance dawned on the British Indian Government after the conclusion of a treaty of friendship with Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Amritsar in 1809, by which they agreed to abstain from any interference with the territories of the Maharaja north of the Sutlej, while he agreed to respect the territories and subjects of the chiefs south of the river. The Maharaja honourably observed his engagements and abandoning his dream of Cis-Sutlej supremacy, turned his attention to the expulsion of the Afghans from the northern districts of the Punjab, and the reduction of Multan, Kashmir and the Derajat. After suffering two reverses in 1812 and 1814, he finally wrested the Valley out of the hands of the Afghans in 1819. During his continuous hostilities with Afghanistan and other smaller principalities, till his death in 1839, he

valued Kashmir not only for its rich yield of revenues, but also for its strategic position which facilitated the numerous expansionist campaigns that he undertook.

Meanwhile the British who, out of fear of the Russian advance into Central Asia and Persia, were getting interested in the northern region of Ranjit Singh's dominions, began casting their covetous eyes on the beautiful Valley. Hence we find a number of British nationals penetrating into Kashmir and adjoining areas to extend the British sphere of influence there. Some of them like Moorcraft, fomented trouble for Ranjit Singh in Ladakh and other frontier regions.

In order to follow the confusing course of events of the time, it will be convenient to give here a brief account of the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, and his relations with the British in the south, and Afghanistan in the north of the Indian sub-continent.

#### THE SIKH GURUS

The Sikhs, originally a religious sect, were hammered into a military power by their conflict with the Mughals and later with the Afghans. Guru Nanak, the founder of the religion, was born in the year 1649 at a village called Talwandi on the bank of the Ravi near Lahore. His life except for his being religious-minded from his childhood, had been uneventful and the influence he left behind was enshrined in his writings which were subsequently collected. The word *Sikh*, literally learners, disciples, was given to his followers by Guru Nanak himself and as the creed spread, it became the title of the whole sect.

Guru Nanak, passing over his two sons, named his disciple, Guru Angad, as his successor. The fifth Guru, Arjan Dev, collected the writings of the founder and this, together with extracts from the works of popular saints and poets recorded in the Punjabi dialect, the popular language, come to be known as the *Adi Granth*.

It was, however, in consequence of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, the ninth Guru, that the purely religious sect of the Sikhs was transformed into a militant force by his son, the great Guru Govind Singh. The circumstances leading to Guru Tegh Bahadur's martyrdom, have been given in detail by Bhai Gyan Singh Gyani in his *Guru Khalsa Twarikh*.

Iftikar Khan, a Governor of Aurangzeb, was using force to convert the Pandits in Kashmir to Islam. Some pious men among the Pandits then met and decided to go to Amarnath and invoke the mercy



of Siva there for deliverance from the tyrannies of this bigot. At the Amarnath Cave one of the Pandits saw Lord Siva in a dream Who told him to go to Tegh Bahadur, the Ninth Sikh Guru, in the Punjab and ask for his help to save the Hindu religion. He spoke to his companions about this revelation. About 500 Pandits proceeded to Anandpur where Guru Tegh Bahadur was living. They told him about the atrocities committed on them by Aurangzeb's governor, Iftikar Khan, in Kashmir. The Guru was deeply touched on hearing the details, and was in a sorry and pensive mood. At that time his son, Govind Singh, who was then a child of fourteen years of age and was playing outside, came to him. He saw a crowd of Pandits sitting there in distress and his father mute as a fish. He asked his father why he looked pensive. Guru Tegh Bahadur, pointing towards the Pandits, told his son mournfully that the Hindus were being forced to renounce their religion and that, he thought, they could be protected if some holy man offered himself to be sacrificed for them. Guru Govind Singh, with folded hands, said to him—"Father, who else is a holier man, fit for being sacrificed than yourself for saving the Hindu religion?" Guru Tegh Bahadur replied—"I have absolutely no hesitation in giving my head but I am grieving that as you are still a child, who would take care of you after me." Guru Govind Singh replied earnestly, "Almighty God would take care of me." Guru Tegh Bahadur was pleased to hear this courageous answer from his worthy son and then advised the crowd of Pandits to go to Aurangzeb and tell him straight-away that they, together with all the Brahmans in Kashmir, were quite ready to embrace Islam if Tegh Bahadur, who was the Chief Guru of the Hindus, would first be converted. The Pandits went to Nawab Zalim Khan, the then governor of Lahore, and presented to him their petition which had been dictated by Guru Tegh Bahadur. The governor gladly endorsed it and gave it back to the Pandits to be presented to the emperor at Delhi. He gave them all necessary help for reaching that place safely. They went and presented the petition to Aurangzeb. The emperor was highly gratified to read it and called the *Qazis* and *Moulvis* in a Durbar and joyfully announced the contents of the petition to them. Of course, they all received the tidings with acclamation. He told the Pandits that he cheerfully accepted the condition laid. He sent them back to Kashmir, making suitable arrangements for their return journey. He wrote to Iftikar Khan, governor of Kashmir, to desist from forcible proselitising, for, he was now satisfied that no more force was needed for attaining the object in view.

Aurangzeb sent a letter by an official to Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur, inviting him to come to Delhi. Before the imperial officer

reached him, the Guru, accompanied by five attendants, started for Agra on 11th Har, 1732 (25th June, 1675 A. D.) At Agra he was arrested by the Kotwal there and sent to the emperor at Delhi. His five attendants went with him, reaching Delhi on 1st Maghar, 1732 (15th November 1675 A. D.). He had an interview with the emperor. The latter pressingly solicited him to embrace Islam. The Guru had words with him, roaring emphatically that he spurned the idea. The emperor, wrinkled his brows and ferociously ordered the executioner to take the Guru to a place to be beheaded there. While being taken to the place of execution the Guru quietly told one of his five attendants, Bhai Jita, that, after he was beheaded, he should take away his head to Guru Govind Singh. On 13th Maghar, 1732 (27th November 1675 A. D.), Guru Tegh Bahadur was beheaded. Bhai Jita stealthily took away his head. When he neared Anandpur, Guru Govind Singh went forth to meet him and, bowing reverently, received his father's head. In the turban bound round the head was found a paper with the following ennobling words written thereon :—*Sar-i-khud dadam magar sir-i-Khuda na dadam*, meaning that he had given his head but not God's secret (i. e. religion). The head which wore the glorious crown of martyrdom, was duly cremated. Guru Govind Singh, being intensely grieved at the ferocity of Aurangzeb in killing his innocent father, took a solemn vow to avenge his death by taking to arms and embarking on a crusade to free the country from the rule of the Mughals.

#### THE SIKHS BECOME A MILITARY POWER

Being yet only a boy of fifteen years, Guru Govind Singh fled to the hills where he completed his education. He mastered Persian, Hindi and Sanskrit. At the same time, not neglecting the accomplishments of a well-born youth of his age, he became a keen sportsman and skilled in all feats of arms. When he emerged from seclusion he was at once accepted by the Sikhs as their natural and hereditary leader, and they were quite ready to follow him to avenge the murder of his father. Assured of the support and loyalty of his followers, Guru Govind Singh began boldly to preach the new doctrine which was that the Sikhs should follow a political creed and unite into a military community. With this object in view he compiled the scriptures, adapting these to suit his own doctrine. His object was not, however, to overturn or indeed to modify in any important particulars the doctrine bequeathed by Guru Nanak, but to produce a work which should kindle in his followers a patriotic and self-sacrificing spirit.

He and his followers soon clashed with the forces of the Mughal emperor, who captured his two sons. The children were taken to

Sirhind and there, "by order of the emperor Aurangzeb, were buried alive". But this tragedy did not dampen the spirit of the Guru who continued to give fight to the forces of the decaying Mughal empire. His life was cut short at the age of forty-eight by an assassin in 1708 A. D.

Guru Govind Singh had announced to his disciples that he was the last of the prophets. At his death the Sikhs had become a formidable force, organised into a proud, ambitious and warlike people, possessed of a common faith, fully armed and equipped for victory. With nothing but their faith, their brave heart and their swords, they were engaged in a brave struggle with the mighty Mughal empire.

The history of the Sikhs from the death of Guru Govind Singh to the birth of Ranjit Singh, a period of seventy-two years, is of great and varied interest, and includes the invasions of Nadir Shah, of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and the gradual decline and disintegration of the Mughal empire, whose governors and lieutenants threw off the authority of the emperors and declared themselves independant.

The military successor of Guru Govind Singh was Banda Bairagi, who on more than one occasion defeated the imperial troops and ravaged the country of the Bari Doab. He was however captured in 1716 and put to death. The invasion of Nadir Shah and his conquest of Delhi and plunder of the city so weakened the Mughal government that the Sikhs took heart and again prepared for battle. They attacked and scattered detachments of Nadir Shah's army, or later plundered the baggage of Ahmad Shah Abdali who invaded the Punjab in 1747. The horsemanship, frugal habits, and rapidity of movement of the Sikhs made them formidable opponents and although they received constant and severe defeats from the better armed Muhammadan troops, they never lost heart and only dispersed to reappear again in increasing numbers.

#### SIKH MISLS OR CONFEDERACIES

Ahmad Shah invaded India year after year, but quickly lost the provinces he conquered. On each occasion he had to reckon with the Sikhs, who ever gained confidence and power and were forming themselves into *misls* or confederacies, in which a number of chiefs agreed, after a somewhat democratic and equal fashion, to follow the flag and fight under the general orders of one powerful leader. This organisation made them more formidable, and the several chiefs building their forts in convenient places gradually overran the whole of the Punjab, shutting up the Muhammadan governors of Abdali in their forts of Sirhind, Dinanagar and Lahore.



It was in 1761-62, that the Sikhs abandoning their strategy of guerilla warfare, made a stand against a regular army. The Sikhs who had assembled near Barnala in Patiala were surprised, surrounded and compelled to give battle by the army of Ahmad Shah Abdali, and were defeated with the loss of 20,000 men and many prisoners. But no sooner had Ahmad Shah returned to Kabul than the Sikhs regained courage and the combined confederacies attacked and defeated his governor at Sirhind of which they took immediate possession. Ahmad Shah who returned the following year made no attempt to recover Sirhind and assigned the district to a Sikh chieftain on payment of an annual tribute.

Thus the Sikhs, both by their victory and defeat acquired a status which they did not possess before but once the common enemy was overcome, the *misls* resisted all attempts at dictation by one central authority, until Maharaja Ranjit Singh broke down opposition and reduced rivals and enemies to a common obedience.

The Sikh *misls* were twelve in number, namely, Phulkian, Ahluwalia, Bhangi, Kanheya, Ramgarhia, Singhpuria, Krora Singhia, Nisania, Sukarchakia, Dulelwala, Nakkais, and Shahids. These *misls* or confederacies were functioning under their respective leaders who held the districts and carried on a semblance of administration over them. But their composition was always changing and their possession passed from one hand to another very rapidly. When they had no common enemy to face, they fought against one another, and their internecine war was only ended by Maharaja Ranjit Singh who under his strong hand turned the Khalsa into a formidable force and built up a strong kingdom for himself.

#### RISE OF RANJIT SINGH

Born in 1780 he was destined to lead an active and adventurous life from his boyhood. His father, Mahan Singh, the enterprising leader of the Sukarchakia *misl* had succeeded to the command of the confederacy at his father's death in 1773 when he was only a boy of twelve. In 1774, Mahan Singh married Raj Kaur, the daughter of the Raja of Jind, who six years later gave birth to Ranjit Singh. Mahan Singh during his brief career of twenty-seven years was constantly at war with his neighbours and rivals.

Although Ranjit Singh was only twelve years old when his father died in 1792, he had already accompanied him on expeditions. His prospects at his father's death would have been very unfavourable had it not been for his mother-in-law, Sada Kaur, who was not only a woman of the greatest ability, but had succeeded as the widow and

heiress of Sardar Gurbaksh Singh, to the head of the Kanheya *misl*. Taking full command of the forces of the two confederacies into her hands, this remarkable lady resolved to break the power of all her rivals. Ranjit Singh, however, asserted his authority soon and fortunately for him, a special opportunity for distinction arose when Shah Zaman, the grandson of Ahmad Shah Abdali, marched into northern Punjab to recover, if possible, his ancestor's lost provinces. In 1797-98 Zaman occupied Lahore without any serious opposition from the Sikhs, who pursuing their usual tactics of avoiding a pitched battle while harassing the rear-guard of the enemy, forced Zaman, already worried by domestic troubles, to evacuate Lahore and return home. Crossing the Jhelum in flood, the Afghan monarch lost twelve of his guns, and not being able to wait for their extrication, he promised Ranjit Singh then master of that part of the Punjab, the grant of the city and district of Lahore, with the title of Raja, if he would send them to him. This Ranjit did, and Zaman Shah kept his promise. Ranjit took possession of Lahore without much opposition and set up his headquarters there.

The acquisition of Lahore in 1799, with the legally acquired title of Raja, made Ranjit Singh a very powerful chief. This filled the Sikh barons with alarm and some of them were anxious to defeat his ambitious schemes. But Ranjit was too clever to fall a victim to their intrigues and he boldly attacked the fort of Amritsar and driving away the Bhangis, entered the city in triumph. He thus became the master of the two Sikh capitals, political and religious, and the dominating chief of the Punjab. It was only a matter of time for the remaining confederacies to fall before the Maharaja who emerged the undisputed ruler of the Trans-Sutlej Punjab almost unheeded by the British.

#### ANGLO-SIKH RELATIONS

For, during all these years they had been busy with their own campaigns against the Marathas and with the conquest of Hindustan. The red line on the map which marked the British frontier was ever widening. Banaras, Oudh, Allahabad, Kanpur, had in turn fallen, when in September, 1803, General Lake defeating the Maratha army beneath the walls of Delhi, entered the capital of Hindustan as a conqueror. Two months later the Marathas were again defeated at Laswari and the Scindia ceded Sirsa, Hissar, Rohtak and Gurgaon to the British.

This brought the new power in collision with the Cis-Sutlej Sikh chiefs who in the following years gave them trouble in the neighbourhood of the Jamuna and ravaged the country up to the walls of Delhi.

The British had thus to conclude a treaty of friendship with Ranjit Singh in 1806 which practically secured him from British interference in his plans of conquest north of the Sutlej, but left undefined the position of the country held by Sikh chiefs south of the river.

In 1806 some of the chiefs quarrelling amongst themselves called in Ranjit Singh who, eager to extend his influence, crossed the river both in that year and in the following one. Some of the Sikh chiefs taking alarm, applied in 1808 to the British in Delhi for protection, and the latter despatched a mission under Metcalfe to persuade Ranjit to confine his kingdom to a line north of the Sutlej and to suggest an offensive and defensive alliance against the French, if they should ever march on India through Persia.

Obviously this mission and the one of Elphinstone to Kabul was due to the fear of a Franco-Russian invasion through the north-western passes of India. Though geographically it may now appear an impossibility yet in those days when ancient kingdoms in Europe were falling like ninepins, no one could set a limit to the power and ambition of Napoleon. The battle of Copenhagen and the assassination of the Tzar gave Napoleon other work to do, and Russia and Britain made a treaty in 1805. But Napoleon entered into an alliance with Persia and agreed to aid Persia against Russia, and Persia undertook to provision and reinforce any French army marching through their country to invade India. Within a year, however, Napoleon had again other work upon his hands, and the vision of a French empire in the East faded away. When the danger of a French invasion was recognised as over, the British employed pressure tactics on Ranjit Singh and induced him to sign the the treaty of Amritsar in April, 1809.

But though he was given a carte-blanche so far as the region to the west and north of the Sutlej was concerned, the British did not look with equanimity his rapid conquest of vast territories extending up to the Karakoram. Ranjit Singh on his part followed the terms of the treaty scrupulously, but the British who had their eye on the frontier regions of Afghanistan and the Derajat, secretly carried on political intrigue there. They openly took over the Sis-Sutlej states and occupied Ferozepur where they set up a military cantonment in 1835.

But when Maharaja Ranjit Singh wanted to have Shikarpur in Sind, the British did not approve of it. To crown all they entered into negotiations with Shah Shuja which resulted in the Tripartite Treaty of 1838 between the British, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Shah Shuja, assuring the latter the throne of Afghanistan with the help of the British and Sikh troops. The Maharaja politically and financially



weakened by the numerous frontier wars and physically in the last stages of decay, was an unwilling partner in this business, but knowing full well that he could not improve his position by remaining aloof, he signed the Treaty.

#### EXTENSION OF SIRH KINGDOM

All these moves by the British were due to the fact that Ranjit Singh came to be considered as their rival in India and consequently an attempt was made to check and curb his power. The Maharaja after the Treaty of Amritsar turned his attention to the conquest of the territories held by Nawab Muzaffar Khan of Multan. After several attempts at the reduction of the fort, he finally succeeded in capturing it in 1818. In the following year he annexed the province of Kashmir, wresting it out of the hands of the Afghans. This more than doubled the area of his possessions. He had already subjugated Kangra in 1809. All the Musalman chiefs and nobles of the Punjab—Kharrals, Ghakhars, Tiwanas, Chibs, etc—fell one by one, under the supremacy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and by the year 1820 his power may be said to have been consolidated and absolute throughout the Punjab proper from the Sutlej to the Indus.

His conquest of Peshawar and the hill country of Hazara, however, was a difficult and lengthy operation, costing him much in money, officers, and troops. After several ineffective campaigns, the city and province of Peshawar became tributary to the Maharaja in 1823. But these districts were a constant source of trouble and expense, and in frequent conflicts with the Barakzai chiefs and the ferocious and untamable tribes he lost many of his best officers and troops. This explains his great need of money and the consequent heavy and cruel exactions which he levied on his subjects in general and Kashmiris in particular. His worries grew with every expedition he led to the frontier and severely told on his failing health, and hastened his death which occurred on the 27th June, 1839.

A great warrior and statesman, Ranjit Singh was one of the great leaders which India produced during the period of transition between the fall of the Mughal and the establishment of the British empires. Like Hyder Ali he was illiterate, but he possessed a sharp memory and a natural genius for command and people obeyed him by instinct. An excellent horseman, he was the *beau ideal* of a soldier; strong, spruce, active, courageous and enduring. At the same time he was selfish and avaricious, grossly superstitious and addicted to drink. But with all his sternness Ranjit Singh was not cruel or blood-thirsty. He treated the vanquished with leniency and kindness. He possessed the faculty

of choosing his subordinates well and wisely, and rewarding good service by liberal grants in cash or estates. He was shrewd enough to realise the advantages of having a perfectly trained and disciplined army. He built up a modern army by employing experienced French officers like Court and Avitabile.

But with all his qualities of a born leader, Ranjit Singh was not destined to give peace and tranquility to his subjects. His whole career was employed in conducting military campaigns and this naturally resulted in heavy taxation of, and requisition of forced labour from, the people. His officers and troops, born and bred with a hatred for the Muslims, did not always follow his noble example of religious toleration. This and other pernicious characteristics of his reign had their unfortunate repercussions on Kashmir during the brief period of twenty-seven years that he and his successors ruled over it.

### SIKH RULE IN KASHMIR

The history of the province from the year 1819 when Ranjit Singh conquered it and until its grant by the English to Raja Gulab Singh in 1846, differs little from that of other Sikh districts except that, being far removed from Lahore, the governors were able to fleece the people with more than the usual impunity. "The Sikhs", observes Younghusband "who succeeded the Afghans were not so barbarically cruel, but they were hard and rough masters".<sup>1</sup> Kashmir was administered by ten governors during their rule. Of these one, Diwan Moti Ram, occupied the gubernatorial chair twice.

On its occupation by the Sikh army, Maharaja Ranjit Singh appointed the commander of the forces, Misr Diwan Chand, as the first governor of Kashmir. Belonging to the Hindu trading class, Misr Diwan Chand was the conqueror of Multan in 1818, and the leader of the successful expedition to Kashmir in 1819. Excepting for his mopping up operations in the hilly tracts of the Valley, there is nothing worthy of note in Misr Diwan Chand's brief governorship.

More important, however, is the rule of the second governor, Diwan Moti Ram, son of Diwan Mokham Chand, the able general of the Maharaja. Moti Ram though indolent and not troubling himself much about administration, was yet a kind-hearted man and liked by the people. During his short tenure of fourteen months he was assisted by Pandit Birbal Dhar, the collector of revenues.

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<sup>1</sup> *Kashmir*, p. 142.

## HARSH TREATMENT OF MUSLIMS

In their first flush of victory, the Sikh officials both civil and military, overlooked the fact that though the majority of Kashmiris professed the Muslim faith, they were as much an oppressed people under the Afghans as the Hindus and needed an enlightened ruler. Accustomed to facing bitter opposition from Muslims in the Punjab and Frontier District, they looked at the Kashmiris in the same light and promulgated orders with a view to checking the emergence of a Muslim opposition in the Valley. Consequently one of the first acts of Diwan Moti Ram was to close the Jama Masjid at Srinagar to public prayers in order to prevent, as he thought, the meeting together of Muslim leaders and their followers who, he imagined, might plot against the Sikhs. The Mussalmans were forbidden to say *aza'n* or the call to prayer. In fact one over-zealous commander, Phula Singh, trained his guns on the Shah Hamadan mosque from the opposite bank of the river to blow it up on the plea that it had been built over a Hindu shrine. But on the intervention of Birbal Dhar, the influential noble of the time, the order was not executed. "It is to the lasting credit of Birbal Dhar that when a deputation of Muslims headed by Sayyid Hassan Shah Qadiri Khanyari approached him to dissuade the Sikhs from the destruction of the *Khanaqah* he moved in the matter, used his influence and saved this historic structure from vandalism."<sup>1</sup> The Sikh commander, however, declared several other mosques, like Pathar Masjid, as the property of the State. Cow slaughter was declared a crime punishable by death and many people accused of killing cows were publicly hanged.

## HEAVY TAXATION

But Moti Ram was personally a kind-hearted man and "by his just and human conduct restored confidence in the Valley."<sup>2</sup> He, however, remained in office for only fourteen months and wishing to retire to Banaras, resigned the appointment on the death of his eldest son, Ram Dayal, who was killed in Hazara in 1820. The Maharaja sent as his successor the fighting general, Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa. But his ideas of government were so primitive that there was widespread distress in the land. He resumed the Jagirs and hereditary allowances held by a number of families and persons from the time of the Mughal emperors and devoted his attention to the collection of the last farthing that could be extracted from the poor Kashmiri tax-payer. Pandit Birbal Dhar who had induced Ranjit Singh to invade and annex Kashmir, was

<sup>1</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, Vol. II, p. 726.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 199,



in charge of collection of revenues and when in 1821 Maharaja Ranjit Singh called him and his colleagues to Lahore for inspection of accounts, he so impressed the Maharaja with his zealous performance of duty which resulted in the remittance to the Lahore Treasury of over forty lakhs of rupees, that he bestowed honours on the Pandit and sent him back in state to Srinagar. This signal honour to Birbal evoked jealousy in his cousin-brother, Ganesh Dhar, who sowed seeds of discord between Hari Singh Nalwa, the governor, and Birbal Dhar, the revenue farmer, and soon on the reports of the former that Birbal was hatching an intrigue with the chiefs of the hill districts, Ranjit Singh summoned him to Lahore, where he was dismissed from service and all his property confiscated.

Hari Singh Nalwa led a small expedition to the Jhelum valley, the Khakha leader of Uri having defaulted in the payment of his annual tribute. He built a fort at Uri and confiscating the property of the Khakha chief, posted a Sikh garrison therein.

Hari Singh Nalwa introduced a new rupee of base coinage in Kashmir, known as Hari Singhi rupee which continued to be in circulation till late into the nineteenth century. Worth about twelve annas, the coin carried on the obverse the legend *Sri Akal Jiu* and on the reverse *Hari Singh*. Rents, taxes and custom duties were generally paid in this coin.

Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, could not, due to his misgovernment of the province, remain in charge of the administration for long. Maharaja Ranjit Singh recalled him and sent back Diwan Moti Ram again. He remained in charge till 1825 and during this second tenure tried to ameliorate the miserable condition of the people. He reappointed Birbal Dhar to the office of revenue collector, but the two could not pull on well together and on the charge of his revenue having fallen in arrears not only confiscated his property but put him behind the bars where ultimately he died. It is "a strange irony of fate that he who had made it possible for the Sikh ruler to occupy the country and who greatly contributed to the strengthening of the administration should have died as prisoner."<sup>1</sup>

#### MOORCRAFT'S ACTIVITIES IN LADAKH

It was during Moti Ram's governorship in 1822 that Moorcraft arrived in Kashmir from Ladakh where he had gone by the Kulu route two years earlier, ostensibly to find out ways and means for extending British commerce in Central Asia, but really to collect information,

<sup>1</sup> Kilam, *History of Kashmiri Pandits*, p. 256.

geographic, political and military, for the British government in India. He was accompanied in these journeys by George Trebeck. Moorcraft was the superintendent of the military stud of the East India Company, but his adventurous spirit took him to the remotest corners of northern India till then unknown to the European travellers.

Proceeding to Lahore from Ludhiana, he obtained Ranjit Singh's permission to travel in Ladakh and entering it by the Bara Lacha pass he and his companion soon reached Leh. From there they toured the Nubra Valley and a longer expedition took them to the eastern boundary of Ladakh beyond the Pangong Lake. He was, however, recalled to Leh when he was near Chushul, but the journey was continued by Trebeck. He wanted to go to Yarkand and while waiting for the permission of the Chinese authorities, he travelled to Dras and Trebeck went to Spiti. The Chinese authorities, however, refused him permission to go to Yarkand and he decided to set out for Bokhara by way of Kashmir and Kabul. He spent six months in Srinagar till May, 1823, in "collecting information and occasional excursions." Having obtained passports for their onward journey after some delay, Moorcraft and Trebeck proceeded to Peshawar and on to Kabul and Bokhara. At Andkho, however, Moorcraft fell ill and died and his property was looted. Trebeck having gone on to Mazar, also succumbed to fever and died there.

Moorcraft's journeys in Ladakh and Kashmir were motivated by the dread that the British were developing of the Russian advance towards Afghanistan and Central Asia. A former king of Afghanistan, Shah Shuja, was passing his days in Ludhiana as a stipendary of the British. In short the stage was being set for a vigorous forward policy in the north. Moorcraft, when he reached Ladakh in 1821, "became possessed of a letter from the Russian Minister, Prince Nesselrode, recommending a merchant to the good offices of Ranjit Singh and assuring him that the traders of the Punjab would be well received in the Russian dominions, for the emperor was himself a benign ruler, he earnestly desired the prosperity of other countries, and he was especially the well-wisher of that reigned over by the King of Sikhs. The person recommended had died on his way southward from Russia; and it appeared that, six years previously, he had been the bearer of similar communications for the Maharaja of Lahore and the Raja of Ladakh."<sup>1</sup>

No wonder Moorcraft engaged himself in political intrigue in Ladakh to the annoyance of Ranjit Singh and the embarrassment of the

1 Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 150.

British Indian Government. He actively encouraged the Raja of Ladakh to refuse payment of tribute to the Sikh governor of Kashmir, and got an application of the Raja forwarded to the British government seeking the protection of the British. In these parts Moorcraft "gave himself out, under the rose, as the forerunner of an English conquest."<sup>1</sup> When Ranjit Singh reported this to Metcalfe, the British Resident at Delhi, Moorcraft was censured by the Bengal Government and Ranjit was informed that he had acted without any authority from the East India Company. Moorcraft also made direct overtures to Ahmad Shah, the chief of Baltistan, and promised him British support in the event of a Sikh invasion of his territory. All this shows the active interest that the British were taking in Kashmir and its frontier regions as early as the first quarter of the nineteenth century.

Diwan Moti Ram's second tenure of office as governor of Kashmir ended with his recall in 1825 "when the family fell into disgrace owing to the sinister influence of Raja Dhyani Singh, and Diwan Chuni Lal, a man of no account, took his place for a year and a half."<sup>2</sup> He and the revenue, farmer Gurmukh Singh, did not pull on well together and with the deteriorating economic condition of the people, it resulted in a serious drop in revenue. Chuni Lal was recalled by the Maharaja, but fearing a harsh treatment at the latter's hands, he committed suicide by poison while on his way to Lahore.

#### DIWAN KRIPA RAM

He was succeeded by Diwan Kripa Ram, the son of Diwan Moti Ram and the grandson of Diwan Mokham Chand. Intelligent and having uncommon ideas of magnificence, he beautified Srinagar with many fine buildings and pleasure grounds. The Rambagh garden where stands Maharaja Gulab Singh's monument, was laid out by him.

He was a mild, self-indulgent man, fond of boating and nicknamed "Kripa Shroin" after the sound of the boat-paddle. Wherever he went, he was followed by dancing girls and even the rowers of his state barge were women.

There occurred a severe earthquake in 1827, followed a few months later by an epidemic of cholera. The earthquake resulted in a fearful loss of life and property. The tremors, some of them severe, continued to take place intermittently for three months. In the meantime cholera was taking a heavy toll of life. The number of dead was so great that there was not enough cloth to shroud the dead bodies in.

1 Jacquemont, *Letters from India*. p. 247.

2 Lepel Griffin, *Ranjit Singh* p. 196



Diwan Kripa Ram had to lead a punitive expedition to Muzaffarabad where the Raja, Zabardast Khan, had raised his banner of revolt. In the initial stages the rebel forces, hiding in mountain fastnesses, inflicted severe losses on the Sikh army, but the commander, Ganesh Pandit Dhar, created dissensions among the several minor hill chiefs and defeated them one by one. Zabardast Khan ultimately surrendered and was pardoned on his undertaking to pay annual tribute regularly to the Maharaja.

Notwithstanding the visitations of natural calamities, the people of Kashmir seem to have recouped their economic well-being under Kripa Ram's mild rule. According to Baron Schonberg, a European traveller who visited Kashmir a few years later (1845), Kripa Ram annually remitted to Ranjit Singh's treasury at Lahore, a sum of forty-two lakhs of rupces "and the country was at that time happy in comparison to what it is now." His chief adviser, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din, made a rough settlement of land, and introduced the system of farming out to the highest bidder the revenues of various Parganas or districts.

In 1831, Kripa Ram again incurred the enmity of Raja Dhyani Singh. "He had given protection to Raja Faiz Talab Khan of Bhimbar, whom both the Dogra Rajas hated and wished to capture; while Kripa Ram resolutely refused to give him up." In the midst of a pleasure party on the Dal lake, he was recalled to Lahore, and there being disgraced, retired to Banaras, where along with his father he led an ascetic life. "His family for three generations had done good and brilliant service for the Maharaja, but this did not save them from the ingratitude of their master, who cared nothing for men whose work was done, or who had become obnoxious to a new favourite. This absolute selfishness of Ranjit Singh, and the shameful manner in which he ignored faithful service were the most unplesasing features in his character. Diwan Mokham Chand, the founder of the Diwan family was his best and most successful general, and it was in great measure owing to his military ability that the Maharaja established himself as sole ruler of the Punjab. But this did not save his son, Moti Ram, or his grandson, Kripa Ram, from constant slights, fines, confiscation and eventual ruin."<sup>1</sup>

On Diwan Kripa Ram's recall to Lahore, the Maharaja appointed Bhima Singh Ardali as acting governor of Kashmir. Not much is known of his antecedents. He was at the head of the administration for a year (1831) and the only event of note was a serious outbreak of sectarian riot among the Shias and the Sunnis in which the whole locality

1 Lepel Griffin, *Ibid*, pp. 196-197.

of Zadibal, a suburb of Srinagar inhabited mostly by Shias, was burnt. The following winter was unusually cold and the people suffered a great deal.

It was in the same year that Victor Jacquemont, a French Naturalist, visited Kashmir. Born in 1801, Jacquemont had visited America and West Indies when he was appointed by the Jardin des Plantes in Paris to carry out a botanical survey in India. Very soon the Himalayas attracted him and after taking Ranjit Singh's permission to visit Kashmir, he travelled via the Poonch route. After encountering some opposition from a minor hill chief, he succeeded in reaching the Valley where he spent five months, studying the people and the political situation. He met Bhima Singh who invited him to a party at the Shalamar garden. The Governor welcomed him there with an embrace and "rubbed his long beard on my left shoulder whilst I rubbed mine on his left." In one of his visits to the Burzil pass—the route leading to Gilgit—he received an envoy of the local chief, Ahmad Shah, who having been assured of British help and subsidy by Moorcraft, wanted further assurances from Jacquemont whom he took as an agent of the British Government. In the fall of 1831 Jacquemont left Kashmir via the Pir Panjal pass and met Raja Gulab Singh at Jammu. From there he went to Amritsar where Ranjit Singh inquired of him even the minutest details pertaining to the administration of the province.

By 1830 Ranjit Singh had brought Peshawar and the adjoining territories under his sway. Hazara was subjugated too. The rapid defeat of several Muslim chieftains and the rise of a strong non-Muslim State, produced a wave of reaction against the Sikhs. This resentment among the Muslims produced a political-cum-religious leader in the person of Sayyid Ahmed Shah, who collected round him a number of devoted followers. He preached religious and social reform among the Muslims and made an attempt at the political rehabilitation of the Indian Muslims. With his band of followers he travelled from Hindustan to the frontier regions of Ranjit Singh's dominions—Peshawar and Hazara. The turbulent Afghans and tribesmen joined him in large numbers and soon Sayyid Ahmed was successful in driving out the Sikh garrison from Peshawar. His puritanic doctrines and the presence of his Indian followers, did not find favour with some of the chiefs of the tribal area and he had to relinquish Peshawar where Ranjit re-established his authority. In 1831, Sayyid Ahmed proceeded to the left bank of the Indus to give battle to the Sikhs. "The Sayyid depended chiefly on the few 'Ghazis' who had followed his fortunes throughout, and on the insurrectionary spirit of the Muzaffarabad and other chiefs. The hill 'Khans' were soon brought under subjection by the efforts of Sher

Singh and the Governor of Kashmir ; yet Ahmed continued active, and, in a desultory warfare amid rugged mountains, success for a time attended him ; but during a cessation of frequent conflicts, he was surprised early in May, 1831, at a place called Balakot and fallen upon and slain."<sup>1</sup>

All this shows the disturbed political conditions round about Kashmir during the thirties of the last century, and the consequent need by the Sikhs of a large number of forces and huge sums of money to hold these hilly tracts. It is not, therefore, difficult to account for the cruel exactions levied upon the poor Kashmiris by the Sikh governors and their subordinates, and the constant harassment to them through the demand of forced labour (*Begar*) for carrying supplies to the soldiers in the field.

This helpless and pitiable condition of the people was further aggravated during the following three years, when Kashmir fell into the grip of one of the most severe famines in its long history. Man and Nature combined in bringing it about.

#### FAMINE

In 1832 when Prince Sher Singh, the reputed son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, took over from Bhima Singh Ardali the governorship of Kashmir, the Maharaja started from Lahore on a visit to the Valley. He deputed Jamadar Khushal Singh and Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din to collect supplies for his camp. They executed the orders with such rigour that there resulted a scarcity all over the province. Ranjit Singh, however, came to know of it and went back to Lahore from Poonch. Then in the month of October when rice had not yet been harvested there was a heavy snow-fall which destroyed the entire crop of this staple food of the Kashmiris. The result was a severe famine. Thousands of people died from starvation and thousands emigrated to the Punjab. The population of the Valley was reduced from eight to two lakhs.

The governor, Prince Sher Singh, did not make any effort to either import foodgrains for the starving people, or to persuade hoarders to bring out the grains and sell them at reasonable rates. Instead he passed his days in drinking and left the affairs of the government in the hands of a worthless official, Baisakha Singh. On the complaints lodged by the people with Ranjit Singh, the Prince was recalled to Lahore and Col. Mian Singh appointed in his place.

#### MIAN SINGH

Known in Kashmir as "Colonel", Mian Singh was the best

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs* p. 172.



of the Sikh governors. He was a veteran soldier and was proud of as many as twentyseven scars of wounds received in several battles fought under the leadership of the Maharaja. On his arrival in Srinagar he witnessed from the balcony of the palace the signs of distress in the land. Not a single lamp was lit in the city and no cock was crowing, all fowl having been eaten by the famine-stricken people. By importing grain and eggs from the Punjab he restored some measure of prosperity among the villagers, and "with a view to stimulating population, remitted the tax upon marriages, and set to work to bring some order in the administration. Revenue divisions were made, and the villages were either farmed out to contractors or leased on the principle that the state took half of the produce in kind. Agricultural advances were made free of interest, proper weights were introduced, and the fraudulent middle men were punished. Colonel Mian Singh decided cases justly and quickly, and won a great reputation in Kashmir."<sup>1</sup>

#### TRouble ON THE FRONTIER

It was during his regime that several European travellers came to Kashmir, ostensibly on evangelical or scientific missions, but in reality to collect information on the condition of the province and its people and the possibility of an English penetration into the frontier territories. There was a spate of such travellers in Afghanistan too at this time, and their presence led the Amir to hope that "the foreign masters of India might be induced to give him stability between contending powers."

All over the tribal territory and Afghanistan trouble was brewing for the Sikhs. Amir Dost Muhammad who ruled over a part of Afghanistan launched an attack on the Sikhs in the hope of recovering Peshawar and adjacent areas. Though gaining a few initial successes on the northern borders of Ranjit's dominions, he was repulsed with great loss in May, 1835, when the Sikhs were "commonly said to have 80,000 men in the Peshawar Valley". Intermittent skirmishes continued for over two years, and in April, 1837, the combined Afghan forces invested the Maharaja's fort at Jamrud which was under the command of the brave general, Hari Singh Nalwa. The latter was killed in action there but though the Afghans plundered the adjoining valley, the Sikh garrison held out till the arrival of a massive force from Lahore which dispersed the Afghans and completely occupied the Peshawar Valley.

But the British were now openly active there. Ranjit Singh had

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<sup>1</sup> Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 200

scarcely vindicated his supremacy on the frontier, when they interfered to embitter the short remainder of his life, and to set bounds to his ambition on the west, as they had already done on the east and south. "At the end of a generation the repose of the English masters of India was again disturbed by the rumoured march of European armies."<sup>1</sup> Plans were being prepared for an invasion of Afghanistan in one garb or another, and it was in furtherance of that objective that the mission Alexander Burnes was sent to Afghanistan which later led to the First Afghan War.

#### MIAN SINGH'S ASSASSINATION

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's troubles on the frontier and his gradual decline in health, put a great strain on his financial resources, and the pay of the army ran into arrears. The Sikh soldiers stationed in Kashmir, accustomed to levying exactions on the already famished people, were, however, kept under check by Colonel Mian Singh. This made him unpopular with them and when there was chaos and instability at Lahore following the death of the Maharaja in 1839, they mutinied, and a few of them entering his bed-chamber on the night of April 17, 1841, murdered him in cold blood. His death threw the Valley into gloom and for long the people mourned the loss of this benevolent and just ruler.

To restore authority and punish the mutinous soldiers, Maharaja Sher Singh, then the ruler of the Punjab, despatched Raja Gulab Singh with a strong force. The munity was quelled and in 1842 the Maharaja appointed Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor of Kashmir.

#### ZORAWAR SINGH'S EXPEDITION TO LADAKH

While the Lahore Government was in convulsions, its spirit of progress and annexation was active on the frontiers, which were not hemmed in by British armies. Raja Gulab Singh who had been formally invested as the ruler of Jammu by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1820, was taking full advantage of the chaotic conditions in Lahore following the death of Ranjit Singh. Till then the governors of Kashmir had always been jealous of his inroads into Ladakh and Baltistan, but Mian Singh, the governor of the Valley during the commotions at Lahore, was alarmed into concessions by the powerful and ambitious Raja of Jammu, and he left Skardu, and the whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the conquests of the Raja's lieutenant, Wazir Zorawar Singh. The latter took Ladakh and Garo and reduced the chief of Skardu, Ahmad Shah, to vassalage. In his

<sup>1</sup> Cunningham, *Ibid.*, p. 192.

desire of acquiring territory he was encouraged by his chief and he became so bold as to attack the Lhasa forces with a view to conquering the whole of Tibet. But the long and tedious march over cold and barren uplands and a premature snowfall so weakened the Dogra forces, that they were completely annihilated and Zorawar Singh lost his life. But before his tragic end, he had secured the secession by treaty, ratified by the Chinese and Tibetan governments, of the whole of Ladakh to Jammu.

With the installation of Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor at Srinagar, Raja Gulab Singh acquired an enormous influence in the Valley. From then onwards he was biding his time to formally annex it to his growing kingdom of Jammu.]

In 1843 the Jhelum valley was thrown into confusion by the restless Bombas. Their leader, Zabardast Khan, had been entrapped by the authorities and imprisoned in Srinagar. To avenge this, Sher Ahmad, the most daring of the Bombas, destroyed 7,000 men of the Sikh army at Kahori, and after raiding the countryside, marched with 8,000 matchlocks against Kashmir. The governor's son, Sheikh Imam-ud-din, gave him battle with a force of 12,000 men at Shilal, in the north-west of Kashmir, but was severely defeated. Snow fell, the Sikh leaders were forced to retreat and Zabardast Khan had to be given back to his friends.

To win the goodwill of the Kashmiris, Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din opened the Jama Masjid at Srinagar, the gates of which had been closed to the faithful in 1819. Simultaneously he repaired the temple on the Sankaracarya hill in Srinagar and installed a new *lingam* therein. He restored the Jagirs and cash grants to scholars, poets, mendicants and religious leaders. He ordered the sale of government grain at reduced prices, thus bringing down the price of grain offered for sale by private traders.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din was called upon by Raja Gulab Singh to render aid in transport and supplies for his army sent to quell the risings of Ladakhis following Zorawar Singh's defeat and death in Tibet. The Dogra army, six thousand strong, marched through Kashmir during the winter of 1842, and the governor procured for them fifteen day's rations and ten thousand villagers for carriage of their baggage to the inhospitable regions of Ladakh. This naturally resulted in widespread distress in the Valley. In the following spring Gulab Singh set up his camp at Nasim Bagh to personally supervise the despatch of arms, ammunition and supplies to his forces, and sent four thousand troops more to reinforce his army. His commander, Hari Chand, won a decisive victory and reoccupied Leh, and sent the



Raja of Ladakh as prisoner to Jammu.

In 1842 a call for help reached Mohi-ud-din from one of the scions of the ruling dynasty of Gilgit and the Sikhs seizing upon this opportunity, sent a force under Mathra Dass to Gilgit who installed a chief of their choice on the throne and made him a vassal of the Lahore Government.

Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din was an able and enlightened governor and the people of the Valley would have maintained the progress achieved under Mian Singh, had not the instability at the Lahore Court and the turbulence of the Sikh soldiery, together with the increasing British interference and intrigue in the frontier regions, prevented his efforts at good administration bearing fruit. The rising power of Gulab Singh in Jammu, however, dominated his actions till his death in 1845.

#### END OF SIKH RULE

Sheikh Imam-ud-din, his [son, was appointed to succeed him to the gubernatorial chair. Both the Sheikhs who served under the Sikhs, belonged to the Jullundar district and came of a poor family. Ghulam Mohi-ud-din took service under Diwan Moti Ram's son, Sheo Dayal, and when the latter's brother, Kripa Ram, was appointed as the governor of Kashmir, he took the Sheikh there as his assistant. He suffered along with the fall of the Diwan family, but when Sher Singh ascended the throne of the Punjab the Sheikh returned to power and was appointed as governor of Kashmir on Colonel Mian Singh's death. Gulab Singh, the Raja of Jammu had confidence in Mohi-ud-din and it was at his recommendation that his son, Imam-ud-din was appointed as his successor.

The best mannered and best dressed man in the Punjab, Sheikh Imam-ud-din with his intelligence and good education, would have been a successful governor. But the fluid state of conditions in Lahore and the kaleidoscopic changes in the administration there, did not permit him to exercise effective control over Kashmir, particularly with the growing turbulence of the Sikh soldiery.

For, with the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1839, there was wild anarchy all over the Punjab. After the obsequies were over Prince Kharak Singh, his son, born of Rani Raj Kaur, ascended the throne with the help of Raja Dhyani Singh, who became his prime minister. But soon prince Nau Nihal Singh, the real offspring of Kharak Singh, hastened from Peshawar to take upon himself the duties of ruler. He succeeded without any great effort to remove by murder

his father's adviser, Chet Singh, and then pushing aside his father from the administration, became the defacto ruler of the kingdom. A few months later Kharak Singh died prematurely, care-worn, at the age of thirty-eight, and Nau Nihal Singh became king in name as well as in power. But the same day, after performing the last rites at the funeral pyre of his father he met with death by a stone falling on his head from a door pillar.

The good-natured voluptuary, Sher Singh, was proclaimed as sovereign, but Chand Kaur, the widow of Kharak Singh, would not give up power. A little later a compromise was effected by which Chand Kaur remained the sovereign and Sher Singh the viceregent. Chand Kaur, however, met a sudden death at the hands of her maid-servants who "crushed the head of their mistress with a brick while she was enjoying her siesta."

But Sher Singh addicted to immoderate drinking did not enjoy the throne for long. While reviewing troops, he was shot dead by a scion of the family of Sindhanwalias related to Rani Chand Kaur. Raja Dhyan Singh and Suchet Singh were also killed and so was the boy-prince, Partap Singh, the son of Maharaja Sher Singh.

Prince Dhuleep Singh, a child of nine years, and a reputed son of Ranjit Singh born of the Rani Jindan, was now placed on the throne. The child king was only the titular Maharaja, whereas Rani Jindan wielded real powers. The Sikh soldiers had, during the anarchical days, become turbulent and it was a problem to keep them under control. What with the political murders and rapid change of rulers, the wide-spread discontent among the soldiers whose salaries ran into arrears, and the nefarious activities of British agents in the Punjab and frontier territories, the administration collapsed entirely. And then came the provocation from the British army massed on the Sutlej ready for war. The Rani ordered a march against them and the First Sikh War of 1846 was the result.

After bitter battles and the defeat of the Sikhs, the Treaty of Lahore was concluded between the British and the Lahore Government. It contained a clause by which the British agreed to transfer out of the territory ceded to them by the Sikhs, to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body, all the hilly and mountainous country, with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the river Indus and westward of the river Ravi.

### ECONOMIC CONDITIONS DURING SIKH RULE

The Sikh regime is a landmark in the history of Kashmir. After

five long centuries of Muslim rule, the Kingdom passed into the hands of the Hindus when Maharaja Ranjit Singh conquered it in 1819. The Sikhs were by no means enlightened masters, yet both Hindus and Muhammandans considered their rule far better and far more humane than that of the Afghans. "It must have been," writes Sir Walter Lawrence, "an intense relief to all classes in Kashmir to see the downfall of the evil rule of the Pathans, and to none was the relief greater than to the peasants, who had been cruelly fleeced by the rapacious *sirdars* of Kabul. I do not mean to suggest that the Sikh rule was benign or good, but it was at any rate better than that of the Pathans."<sup>1</sup> There is no doubt about the low standard of life among all the classes of Kashmir during the Sikh rule, but it was to a great extent the legacy of the Afghans and of the numerous atrocities committed by them in the name of religion. The Sikhs ruled for only twenty-seven years and during that period they were pre-occupied with military expeditions and could therefore devote very little time and thought to ameliorating the sad condition of the people. They however freed the Valley of constant incursions of Bombas and Khakhas who used to loot the people of all their property. Baron von Hugel, who visited Kashmir in 1836, writes: "The dreadful cruelties perpetrated by their earlier rulers who, for the smallest offence, punished them with the loss of their noses and ears, make the poor Kashmiris well satisfied with their present comparatively mild government."

#### POLITICAL GEOGRAPHY

The extent of the area of Kashmir that was under the Sikhs was limited to the Valley proper, viz., from Verinag in the south to Baramulla in the north and from the mountain chain in the east to Pir Panjal in the west.

Politically the geography of Kashmir during the Sikh rule was very different from what it is today. Across the Sindh valley in the east was the territory nominally under the joint control of the Sikhs and the tribes residing there, but actually the latter had the sole control. And beyond the border territory were many petty principalities engaged in perpetual warfare among themselves. Consequently the Sikhs were left in peace on that side of the Valley. But to the north-west the case was different. The bold and warlike tribes of Bombas and Khakhas who now and then carried out looting incursions into the Valley, were a constant source of anxiety and danger to the Sikhs. In fact many times during their rule Bombas and Khakhas looted the Valley as far up as Pattan and were with very great difficulty driven

<sup>1</sup> *The Valley of Kashmir*, p. 198.



back by the Sikhs. Consequently the trade route through the Jhelum valley was closed for all commerce. In fact Moorcraft who visited Kashmir in 1822, had to return from Uri as the Khakha chief would not allow him to pass. Towards the south and south-west was the Sikh territory and, therefore, the major part of the trade of Kashmir passed through the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes.

Large tracts of land towards the Lolab and the Sindh valleys were under forests. Much of the cultivable land was nothing but swamp and the now productive *Karewas* (hillocks) were barren. There were only footpaths throughout, and the flood-protection dams and embankments were, of course, totally absent.

The location of the majority of villages and towns was the same as it is at the present time. But Moorcraft's and Hugel's descriptions of Srinagar or of Anantnag in the Sikh period no longer hold true. The city of Srinagar was situated more towards the Nala Mar, where the best houses in the city were to be found. Sheikh Mohall was the centre of trade and in it were the houses of big merchants and bankers. There were several canals flowing through the city. These canals were lined with stone "derived frequently from the ruins of Hindu temples, the sculpture on which was turned inwards." They were crossed at various places by stone and wooden bridges. But their general condition during the Sikh rule was that of decay and they were choked with clay and mud. "The general condition of the city of Srinagar", writes Moorcraft, "is that of confused mass of ill favoured buildings, forming a complicated labyrinth of narrow and dirty lanes, scarcely broad enough for a single cart to pass, badly paved, and having a small gutter in the centre full of filth, banked up on each side by a border of mire. The houses are in general two or three storeys high : they are built of unburnt bricks and timber, the former serving for little else than to fill up the interstices of the latter ; they are not plastered, are badly constructed and are mostly in a neglected and ruinous condition, with broken doors, or no doors at all, with shattered lattices, windows stopped up with boards, paper or rags, walls out of the perpendicular and pitched roofs threatening to fall.....The houses of the better class are commonly detached, and surrounded by a wall and gardens, the latter of which often communicate with a canal ; the condition of the gardens is no better than that of the buildings and the whole presents a striking picture of wretchedness and decay."<sup>1</sup>

Anantnag was the chief town in the Valley. There were three hundred shops of shawl weavers and *gubba* manufacturers. But the

<sup>1</sup> Moorcraft, *Travels in Kashmir, Punjab, etc.* p. 120.

town was as filthy as Srinagar. Baramula, Sopore, Shahabad and Bijbihara were also towns of importance.

#### THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

There is no record of any census having been taken during the Sikh rule. Travellers like Moorcraft and Hugel give varying figures based entirely on rough estimate. Moorcraft writes that the population of the city of Srinagar, although much diminished was very numerous. "One hundred and twenty thousand persons," he writes, "are said to be employed in the shawl manufacture alone; and although this is the chief employment of the population, yet other trades and occupations essential to the support of a large city must at least double the amount. The population of the country is estimated at 800,000." But Baron Hugel who visited Kashmir fourteen years later, writes that the population had declined to one-fourth in the country, namely to 200,000.

The causes of the huge difference between the population of the city and country, are quite obvious. What with the political disturbances and the numerous tyrannies suffered by the peasants, the latter found it very hard to live in Kashmir and a large number of people migrated to the Punjab and other parts of India. When Moorcraft left the Valley in 1823, about 500 emigrants accompanied him across the Pir Panjal pass. Moreover, the severe famine of 1832 caused the death of thousands of people, so much so that Colonel Mian Singh, when he came as the Sikh Governor in 1833, witnessed from the balcony of the Shergarhi Palace that there was not a single lamp lit in the city and heard no cock crowing in the morning, all the fowls having been eaten by the faminestricken.<sup>1</sup> Thus emigration, coupled with death by famine had reduced the population to one-fourth by 1836. The huge population of the city of Srinagar can also be accounted for very easily. Shawl industry which was in a flourishing condition so far as production goes could give employment to some of the impoverished peasants even though the emoluments were barely sufficient to enable a labourer to keep his body and soul together. Moreover, there was in the city greater security from the tyranny of the Sikh soldiery, and peasants fleeing from the country could live on the charity of the government and the big capitalists.

#### THE CLASSES OF POPULATION

During five centuries of Muslim rule which ended in 1819 when the Sikhs conquered the province, nine-tenths of the population had

1. *Jammu and Kashmir State*, by Pandit Anand Koul, p. 107.

accepted Islam, while a large number of the remaining Hindus migrated to the Punjab and India. But still the proportion of the Muslims and Hindus was different from what it is at the present time inasmuch as while the Hindus were not much affected by the famine of 1832, the loss of life was much greater among the Muslims ; and the latter alone left the country in large numbers during the Sikh rule. Therefore, proportionately Hindus were more numerous than they are at the present time.

During the Sikh period there appear to have existed three classes of population—the upper, the middle and the lower. The upper class irrespective of religion, was composed of the Sikh *Sirdars*, the wealthy *Karkhandars* or capitalists, and some families of the Kashmiri Pandits. Kashmiri Pandits in general formed the middle class, while the lower class was formed of the peasantry, the skilled and unskilled labourers.

The economic classes of the country were the government officials, the capitalists and the labourers both skilled and unskilled. Government played a prominent part in the marketing and sale of the manufactured shawls, whereas the capitalist was the man who supplied the material and instruments to the labourer, keeping the latter in perpetual debt and consequently in bondage. The economic classes in the shawl industry—which formed the main industry of Kashmir, employing thousands of men and women—were the same as in the present-day industrial world with the difference that the condition of the worker was worse and much of the burden of taxation of the shawl trade fell on him.

#### ADMINISTRATION

The country was ruled by a Governor, who also represented the Maharaja at all ceremonial occasions. Since Kashmir was conquered with very great difficulty and since the Sikh State was militaristic, most of the Governors were military men. It was Maharaja Ranjit Singh's policy to tamper as little as possible with the existing laws and usages of his territories. But for a greater period Kashmir under the Sikhs was 'occupied' rather than governed. Consequently there was no code of law, but justice depended upon the sweet will of the Qazi—who was the head of the judiciary—or the Governor. All the cases were summarily tried. The form of punishment was imprisonment ; mutilation, so frequently practised by the Afghans, being rarely resorted to. "On the branches of it ( a chenar tree)," writes Hugel, "Criminals are hanged, a punishment of constant occurrence under the Pathan sway, when the smallest offence was visited by death, but now inflicted only in cases of murder. Men are too valuable to the present Ruler to be lightly spared ; penalties and stripes are, therefore, the usual



punishments. The people seem contented with the justice dealt out to them, and admitted to me that not more than one guilty person in every twenty is ever visited with the reward due to his crimes."<sup>1</sup> Colonel Mian Singh during whose governorship Baron Hugel visited the Valley, was noted for his justice. He was popularly called "Colonel Nausherwan" and there are many interesting anecdotes of his method of dispensing justice.<sup>2</sup> When he was assassinated by his mutinous troops in 1842, all the people mourned his death and even up to this day old grannies recite the ballad describing Mian Singh's assassination which has the burden of "*kato gau Colonel Nausherwan*" (Oh ! Why or how has *Colonel Nausherwan* been done away with).

Crime in any form was altogether absent among the Kashmiris themselves. But the Sikh soldiers committed untold persecutions on the poor natives of Kashmir. "The murder of a native by a Sikh," writes Moorcraft, "is punished by a fine to the Government of from sixteen to twenty rupees of which four rupees are paid to the family of the deceased if a Hindu and two rupees if a Muhammadan."

The ancient practice of *Begar* (forced labour) was continued by the Sikhs with greater rigour. A large number of labourers was employed in the transport of military supplies, luggage of high officials, etc from one part of the country to another. Even an ordinary Sikh soldier could command a native to do any work for him. Moorcraft and Hugel give striking illustrations of natives being forced to do unpaid labour for their Sikh masters.

The province was divided into thirty-six Parganas, each under a revenue farmer, who may well be compared to a Taluqdar of Oudh before the humane Tenancy Act of 1859. He had to pay a fixed amount to the government and was free to collect from the peasants as much as he could. Nine-tenths of the produce was not considered too much for the share of a revenue-farmer. Another important official in a Pargana was a Sikh *Kotwal* who was in charge of a body of troopers and had to perform the varied duties of a police officer, public-works officer, sanitary inspector, etc. But more often he perpetrated deeds of violence and oppression on the people than looked after their comfort. And many a *Kotwal* levied unauthorised tolls and taxes on the people, the proceeds of which he pocketed himself.

#### TAXES

Besides the land revenue, the Sikhs levied a number of taxes and

1 Hugel, *Op. Cit.*, p. 156.

2 *Sikka Shahi* was the name given to this method of summary trials as opposed to costly and protracted trials which are so common nowadays.

duties. Toll at the rate of one *tanga* was taken from every traveller who passed the Pir Panjal or the Banihal passes. Imports from India were heavily taxed and so was the shawl-wool coming from Tibet. At Baramgala, the entrance to the Valley via Pir Panjal, duty on salt was realized at the rate of a rupee for a man's load, the annual produce of this duty being said to have amounted to 2,000 rupees.

Every trade and occupation was taxed. The tax on the shawl manufacture alone amounted for sometime to as much as twelve lakhs of rupees per annum. Moorcraft writes that butchers, bakers, boatmen, vendors of fuel, public notaries, scavengers, prostitutes, all paid a sort of corporation tax. "A portion of the *Singhara* (water-nut) crop," he continues, "to the extent annually of a lakh of rupees, it is said, is claimed by the government. The revenue is farmed, and the farmer is independent of the military governor. At the time of our visit the sum paid by the farmer was thirty-eight lakhs of Punjab rupees, equal to twenty-nine lakhs of Sicca rupees, or about two hundred and ninety thousand pounds; but a much larger sum was extorted from the people, although it was only to be realized by the greatest rigour and oppression."

The effect of this oppressive taxation was the impoverishment of the people and consequently large numbers of them fled the state. The trade of Kashmir was ruined. The heavy taxation of the shawl trade had very undesirable effect on the treatment of labourers by the capitalists, and in a large measure was responsible for the decay of this important industry.

#### CURRENCY AND WEIGHTS

A Sikh rupee was the standard coin, the exchange value of which was about ls. 8d. in the then currency of England. The purchasing power of the Sikh rupee was, however, over ten times the purchasing power of the present rupee. The price of a *Kharwar* (184 lbs.) of rice (the staple crop of Kashmir) was from Rs.  $2\frac{1}{2}$  to Rs.  $3\frac{1}{2}$  or from 4 to 5 shillings.<sup>1</sup> Taking the price of a *Kharwar* of rice at the present time at about 25 to 35 rupees, we can deduce that a Sikh rupee was equivalent to about ten rupees of the present day.

A *tanga* or *anna* ( $1/16$ th of a rupee) was the chief circulating coin, and all small transactions were carried on with it. *Cowries* at the rate of 20 to a *tanga* also circulated as money.

The *Kharwar* and its sub-divisions like *Trak* and *Ser* continued to be the standards of weight. Shawl-wool, rice and other crops, salt

<sup>1</sup> Moorcraft, *Op. Cit.*, p. 194.

and sugar, etc., were bought and sold by the *Kharwar* and its sub-divisions.

#### LAND TENURES

The immemorial tradition in Kashmir considers the whole of the land as the property of the ruler. Of some portion of the *Khalsah*<sup>1</sup> land the sovereigns divested themselves by grants in Jagirs for various periods, but when the country came into the hands of the Sikhs, Ranjit Singh made a general resumption and ousted the possessors of Jagirs of every class. Moorcraft gives a clear description of the prevailing methods of land tenures during the Sikh period :

"The *Khalsah* lands are now, as heretofore, let out for cultivation. Those near the city are termed *sar-kishti*, those more remote *pai-kishti* ; or head and foot, upper and lower cultivation. When the grain has been trodden out, a division takes place between the farmer and the government. This was formerly an equal division, but the government has advanced in its demands until it has appropriated about seven-eighths of the *sar-kishti* and three-fourths of the *pai-kishti* crop. The straw falls to the share of the cultivator, but his case would be desperate if it were not practicable to bribe the overseer or watchman to let him steal a portion of his own produce. He has also a house to live in ; he can keep his cattle on the mountains during summer, can cut wood and bring it to the city for sale, can sell wild greens and buttermilk, and can support himself and his family upon the wild fruits of the forest. Still the cultivators of Kashmir are in a condition of extreme wretchedness and, as if the disproportionate demand of the government was not sufficiently oppressive, the evil is aggravated by the mode adopted in disposing of the government share. It is sent into the market at a high price and no individual is allowed to offer the produce of his farm at a lower rate, or sometimes to dispose of it at all, until the public corn has been sold."<sup>2</sup>

The Sikhs, however, learnt their lesson from the terrible famine of 1832, and thereafter "revenue divisions were made, and the villages were either farmed out to contractors or leased on the principle that the State took half of the produce in kind. Agricultural advances were made free of interest, proper weights were introduced and fraudulent middlemen were punished. With a view to stimulating population, the tax on mariages was remitted."<sup>3</sup>

1 Land of which the revenue was the property of the government.

2 Moorcraft, *Op. Cit.*, p. 125.

3 Lawrence; *Op. Cit.*, d. 200.



During Colonel Mian Singh's governorship a rough sort of settlement of land was made and according to Sufi a record of it exists in a manuscript (No. 20) in the State Toshakhana of the former Maharaja of Kapurthala. Besides giving an account of the land and its people the manuscript contains details of revenue from cereals in the thirty-seven Parganas, rates levied on packponies, boats, saffron and *Singhara*, *Dag-shawl* (department of shawls) ; roads ; and Jagirs or assignments of rajas and keepers of shrines.<sup>1</sup>

In 1822, 2,900,000 rupees were collected as land revenue. But what with the famine of 1832 and the method of collecting and selling the government share of the produce, the amount of revenue declined. In 1835 scarcely any revenue could be collected. In 1836, 23 lakhs were demanded, but according to Baron Hugel, it was not likely to be raised. In 1838, Ranjit Singh had reduced the demand to 18 lakhs, but it was not possible to enforce even this collection.

#### AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

On account of the general low standard of life and the small production of rice, another principal article of food of the common people was the *Singhara* or water-nut, which grew abundantly in different lakes of Kashmir. The Wular lake alone "yielded an average return of 96 to 120 thousand ass-loads a year. It constituted almost the only food of at last 30,000 persons for five months a year."

The cultivation of vegetables on floating gardens was carried on very extensively in Kashmir. They yielded cucumbers, melons, water-melons, etc. The price of cucumbers was from ten to twenty for a pice (about the value of a half penny).

Wild fruits grew in abundance and many thousands of acres skirting the hills were covered with apple and pear trees and vines in full bearing. These, as well as apricots, peaches, cherries and plums were also cultivated. Numerous walnut trees were planted throughout the Valley and the nuts were retailed in the city for eating at the rate of 100 for 3 pice. Walnuts were chiefly cultivated for the purpose of extracting oil from them. "The country people break the walnut at home," writes Moorcraft, "and carry the kernel alone to market, where it is sold to oil-pressers at the average of seven rupees per *Kharwar*, each *Kharwar* yielding eight *Pajis* (6 seers each) of oil. About twelve thousand *Kharwars* of walnut kernel are annually appropriated to the oil-presses in Kashmir, producing in the gross return of oil and of oil cake, 1,13,000 rupees, independent of the quantity of nuts eaten by man."

1 Sufi, Kashir.

Walnut oil was exported to Tibet and used to bring a considerable profit.

Grapes, for wine-making, were cultivated in large quantities. There were about eighteen or twenty varieties of grapes in Kashmir of which only four were of foreign introduction. Grapes were gathered in October and were kept through the winter in shallow earthen vessels till spring, when they were applied to the fabrication of wine, vinegar and brandy. The making of wine was discountenanced under the Afghan government, but was revived under that of the Sikhs.

Saffron was cultivated at Pampur. Half of the produce belonged to the State and half to the cultivators. It was exported chiefly to India.

The cotton plant grew in Kashmir in every variety of situation. It was sown in May and cotton was gathered in September and October. Cloth made from it was in general coarse and flimsy. An attempt was made to introduce the brown cotton from Yarkand, but it failed.

About a thousand *Kharwars* of *Kuth* or *Costus*, collected in the mountains of Kashmir were annually exported to Amritsar whence the drug was sent to Calcutta for export to China. For what purpose the Chinese used it, was not known, but in Northern India it was celebrated as a vermifuge and a cure for chronic rheumatism.

An important rural industry of Kashmir during the period was bee-farming. Every peasant's cottage towards the Lar Pargana and the Lolab valley contained four or five hives, which were managed with very little expense and trouble. Moorcraft is all praise for the Kashmir method of bee-farming, since the present scientific system was then unknown. Honey sold at the price of about three pence a pound, but wax was considerably dearer.

Agricultural industry from every point of view was in a most abject condition ; the production was low, the peasants were not allowed to enjoy the fruits of their labour and the state revenue was falling from year to year. There was no regular settlement and the method of collecting revenue was very unjust and oppressive. The peasants had to live for the most part of the year on *Singhara* (water-nut), maize, etc., and their standard of life was very low.

#### NON-AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION

The extent of the **area** of land under forests in Kashmir was much more than it is at the present time. Nearly the whole of the Lolab valley was nothing but forest and similar was the case with the Sindh and the

Liddar valleys. The forests were composed generally of deodar, kail and birch trees and the wild fruit trees grew at their skirt.

There was, however, no government machinery for the proper conservation of forests. They were consequently no-man's property. Wood was very cheap and was employed in large quantities for building and other purposes. It was, however, in the Dogra period that proper attention began to be paid to this valuable asset of the country, which yields a large revenue to the government at the present time.

Kashmiris from ancient times are renowned for their skill in the production of various articles which exhibit a very advanced aesthetic sense. In the Mughal period many fine articles like bedsteads, inkstands, pen-cases, etc., were produced in large quantities. The Afghan rule was nothing but a period of tyranny and despotism and the manufactures for which Kashmir was famous declined. During the Sikh period, however, some of the handicrafts revived and were a source of income to the people and the government.

The papier mache industry was in a flourishing condition. Pen-cases of several varieties were manufactured. Shields, bows and arrows with case, and combs were also made. Every Pandit in former times carried a pen-case in the girdle bound over his *phiran* or garment, or under his arm-pit, wherever he went. The style of painting on these papier mache articles was sometimes applied to palanquins, elephant *houdas*, and even to the walls and ceilings of rooms.

In the time of the Sikhs, manufacture of paper was carried on very largely near Vicharnag. A good quantity of paper was exported to the Punjab.

The workmen of Kashmir had attained a great skill in the fabrication of gun and pistol barrels, damasked sword blades and shields. Iron, used in these articles, was imported from Bajour.

The carpet-weaving industry originally introduced by Zail-ul-abidin, attained the highest pitch of excellence during the Sikh period. How much proficiency the Kashmir carpet-weavers had attained in reproducing Nature's lovely sights on their looms during the Sikh rule, will be apparent from the following anecdote taken from Pandit Anand Koul's *Jammu and Kashmir State* :

"Maharaja Ranjit Singh could never visit Kashmir, though he longed to do so and even started from Lahore in 1832 to fulfil his desire, but had to return from Poonch owing to the occurrence of famine in Kashmir then. Once he wrote in a letter to Colonel Mian Singn, one of his governors from 1834 to 1841: 'Would that I could only once in my life enjoy the delight of wandering through the gardens of Kashmir frag-



rant with almond blossoms, and sitting on the fresh green turf.' The governor in order to gratify, nay, to intensify his master's desire got prepared one fine green carpet, dotted with little pink spots and interspersed with tiny little pearl-like dots, which looked like green turf with pink petals of almond blossoms fallen on it and dew glistening thereon as in spring time. This was a masterpiece of the Kashmir carpet-weaver's art. It was presented to the Maharaja at Lahore; and as soon as he saw it, he was so struck by its beauty of design executed in such artistic excellence that he rolled himself thereon in ecstasy, feigning to be rolling on the real Kashmir turf. The chief weavers of this exquisite carpet, named Fazal Jan, Jabbar Khan and Kamal Ju, were given a reward of a pair of golden bracelets each by the Maharaja."

Cotton, as previously noted, was cultivated in Kashmir but the cloth manufactured therefrom was often of a flimsy and coarse kind; one quality, however, called *kadak* being of a texture particularly close though not fine. The manufacture of cotton cloth was not very extensively prosecuted in Kashmir, because its demand was not obviously great, since the major part of the populace wore a *phiran* made of *pattu* for the whole year round.

Silk was produced in a small quantity, but the industry was in a languishing condition. The quantity produced was insufficient even for local consumption.

But the chief article of woollen manufacture which gave employment to thousands of men, women and children, and which was a source of large income to the government, second only to land revenue, was the Kashmir shawl. It was during the Sikh period that Kashmir shawls were sold in thousands to the fashionable world of Europe. The shawl found its way to Europe through a blind man named Sayyid Yahyah who had come from Baghdad as a visitor to Kashmir in 1796 A.D. in the time of Abdullah Khan' an Afghan governor of Kashmir. When he took leave from the governor, the latter gave him a present of a shawl. The Sayyid having gone to Egypt, gave it as a present to the Khedive there. Soon after Napoleon came to Egypt with his famous fleet and the Khedive gave him this shawl as a present. Napoleon sent it to France and it attracted the fashionable world there. French traders soon came to India and later to Kashmir and exported shawls of various designs to France.

Diwan Kripa Ram was the Sikh governor in 1827 and the shawl trade was in a flourishing condition then, but a terrible famine visited the land in 1832 which gave a crushing blow to the industry.

The quantity of shawl-wool imported annually varied from 500 to

1,000 *Kharwars*. The wool was formerly supplied almost exclusively by the western provinces of Lhasa and by Ladakh; but in the Sikh period considerable quantities were procured from the neighbourhood of Yarkand, from Khoten and from the families of the Great Khirgis Horde. It was brought chiefly by Mughal merchants who exchanged it for manufactured shawl goods, which they disposed of advantageously in Russia.

The price of shawl-wool in different years was as follows :<sup>1</sup>

1794—1807	...	8 rupees per <i>Trak</i> (6 seers)
1807—1813	... 16—20	do. do. do.
1813—1817	... 22	do. do. do.
1817	... 25	do. do. do.
1822 onwards	... 40	do. do. do.

The increase in the price of shawl-wool was due partly to an epidemic among the shawl-wool goats and partly to the new demand arising for shawl goods from Europe and other distant countries. The spinning of shawl-wool was carried on by women only, who worked from morning till night. The average earnings of an industrious and expert spinner were from 3 to 3½ rupees, or from 6 to 7 shillings a month, out of which however, must be deducted the price of the wool (32 *tanqas* equal to 2 rupees) leaving for her labour only one rupee and eight annas.

Numerous varieties of shawls were prepared in Kashmir during the Sikh rule. There were besides, many articles prepared from shawls, viz, *Jamah*, *dupatta*, *rumal*, *shamla*, etc. The price of shawls differed according to the quality of wool, and the number of threads used in a square inch. The price of a plain shawl edged by a single, double or treble border varied from Rs. 60 to 2,000. The price of *Jamawar* varied from Rs. 200 to Rs. 7,000.

The whole value of shawl goods manufactured in Kashmir during the earlier part of the Sikh rule might be estimated at 35 lakhs of rupees per annum. The government charged a duty of 26 percent *ad valorem* and in the time of the Sikh governor, Diwan Kripa Ram, the duty amounted to as much as 12 lakhs of rupees per annum.

<sup>1</sup> Moorcraft, *Op. Cit.*, p. 167.

Besides his political activities Moorcraft engaged himself in finding out the process of manufacture of shawls, so that they might be produced in England. He, therefore, made a thorough study of this art and detailed descriptions of various processes in the making of shawls were sent by him to manufacturers in England. Hence resulted the Paisley shawls, which fulfilled the aims of this enterprising traveller, namely, the complete destruction of this ancient and flourishing industry of Kashmir.

Another article of woollen manufacture was *pattu* which was the chief article of clothing of the poorer people.

#### INDUSTRIAL ORGANISATION

Shawl manufacture which formed the chief industry gave employment to thousands of people. The industry had an elaborate and complex system of division of labour. The wool was spun by women, who sold the twisted yarn to the middleman called *Puivango*. The latter sold it to the weaver, who first of all took it to the man whose function it was to apportion the yarn into skeins according to colours. Then the *Rang-rez* or dyer was employed, who was able to give 64 tints most of which were permanent. The skeins then went to the *Nakatu* who adjusted the yarn for the woof and the weft. Then came the turn of the weaver and when the shawl was completed it was taken to the *Purzgar* who cleaned it of loose strings and *phiri* or second-wool.

Weaving of shawls which involves a wonderful technical skill was performed in low, dirty rooms of *Karkhandars* (manufacturers), accommodating from 3 to 300 weavers. The room was never heated in winter lest the heat destroy the humidity of the air which is so essential to shawl-weaving. The weavers sat on very dirty and torn pieces of matting and awful smell emanated from the room. The weavers were all males, commencing to learn the art at the age of ten.

As regards the weaving of shawls there were always two parties, the master or *ustad* and the scholar or *shahgird*, the former being the capitalist and the latter the workman. Work was executed under four different conditions. "First for wages," writes Moorcraft, "when it almost happens that a system of advances has occurred, by which the workman is so deeply indebted to his employer that he may, in some sort, be considered as his bond-slave. Secondly, upon contract, of which the common term is that one pice is paid for every hundred needles carrying a coloured yarn that shall have been each passed round as many yarns of the warp. Thirdly, a sort of partnership, in which the *ustad* finds all the materials, and the workmen give their labour. When the shawl is sold, the outlay of the *ustad* is deducted from the price, and the remainder is divided into five shares of which one goes to the master and the other four to the workmen. The fourth mode is an equal division of the proceeds, in which case the master not only finds the materials but feeds the workmen."<sup>1</sup>

Almost the same kind of organisation prevailed in the carpet industry. But as regards other industries like leather manu-

1 Moorcraft, *Op. Cit.*, p. 178.



facture, the organisation was just as it is at the present time.

#### PEASANT AND LABOURER

Bearing in mind the wild persecutions of the Pathans from whom the Sikhs wrested the rulership of Kashmir, it is easier to imagine than to describe the wretched condition of the peasantry. The Sikh governors like Diwan Kripa Ram and Colonel Mian Singh tried to alleviate the sufferings of the peasantry but they could not perform the Herculean task of clearing out all the abuses of the revenue and the judicial system of Kashmir. The peasants were thus in a very wretched condition. Moorcraft and Hugel, both of whom visited every part of the Valley, record that many towns and villages wore a dilapidated and half-ruined look. Peasants were migrating in large numbers to the Punjab and the rest of India. There were great hordes of beggars to be found everywhere. In fact whenever Moorcraft or Hugel went out of their place of residence in Srinagar, they used to be surrounded by swarms of half-naked and dirty beggars. The condition of labourers was no better. We have seen that an expert and hard working spinner could earn at the most Rs. 4-8 of the present valuation of a rupee, per month. The taxation policy of the government was so managed by the employers that its greater burden fell on the weaver. Whether he would work or not, he had to pay the tax and this was ruinous to the shawl-trade. By attempting to wrest all the profit from the labourer, the employer overreached himself and killed the industry. The shawl-weaver was considered an inferior order of creation as the proverb would indicate :

*Sini muhima sutsal, rani muhimakhandavav*

"If any vegetable cannot be had, one can still get mallow; if a husband cannot be had, one can still get a shawl weaver."

When this was the condition of the labourers in the shawl trade which was in a flourishing condition, one can easily deduce the condition of labourers in other industries. In short the peasants and labourers lived from hand to mouth and the fruits of their labour were snatched away from them chiefly by the employer and to some extent by the government.

#### COMMERCE

Nearly all the imports and exports from and to the Punjab and other parts of India passed through the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes. The Jhelum valley route on account of political disturbances, was closed to all trade. The shawl-wool trade with Tibet and the shawl trade with Russia passed through the Ladakh and Gilgit routes. All the stages on these routes are well-known to require any mention here.

The principal markets for the productions of Kashmir were the whole of India, China, Russia, and the European countries like England, France, etc. Baron Hugel, when he visited Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Lahore, saw all his courtiers wearing magnificent and costly shawls of Kashmir. *Kuthlan* or Costus, extracted from the forests of Kashmir, was exported to China. The principal articles of import consisted of shawl-wool, salt, sugar, a small quantity of cotton cloth, iron for damasked sword blades, condiments, and gold and silver.

The chief markets of internal trade were different towns like Anantnag, Shahabad, Baramula Sopore, etc. Each town was, moreover, noted for some manufacture of its own, e.g., *gubbas* or woollen carpets were manufactured at Anantnag, *pattu* at Sopore, and so on. The internal trade of the country was carried on by means of boats and beasts of burden. All kind of wheeled traffic was unknown. There were only footpaths throughout the country; and in the city and towns the streets were so narrow that two persons could with difficulty walk abreast.

#### STANDARD OF LIFE

From the account given above we cannot but deduce that the general standard of life of the Kashmiris under the Sikh Government was very low. The dress of the people, their dwellings, in fact, their every article of necessity were far from desirable. Both men and women wore a long and loose garment (*phiran*) made of coarse *pattu* cloth. This garment was very occasionally, if at all, washed and formed both the winter and the summer dress. A good number of people could not even afford this and they went about in tattered and dirty rags.

On the other hand the aristocracy composed chiefly of some Sikh *Sirdars*, the capitalists or *Karkhandars* and some families of the Kashmiri Pandits, lived in a very pompous and luxurious style. They had palaces to live in, which contained very costly pieces of furniture like carpets, shawl hangings, papier mache articles, etc. A wealthy *Karkhandar* used to feed two hundred poor people every day. When an aristocrat had to go about in the city, he was followed by a number of servants and his boat was rowed by a large number of boatmen, and even sometimes by pretty boatwomen, on whose wrists jingles were tied which produced a very pleasant sound when the boat was paddled.

The standard of life among the middle class people like the Kashmiri Pandits was also very low. We have already given a picture of Srinagar where the Pandits formed a good proportion of the population and from it we cannot get any good impression of their general stan-

dard of life. The Pandits wore the usual *phiran* with a girdle of cloth round their waist, under which they carried the *qalamdan* or pen-case. They had rarely a second change of clothing and it was not unusual for a Pandit to apply for, and be given, leave for a day or two to wash his *phiran* and turban. The food of the middle class consisted of rice, mutton, fish and various vegetables.

The food of the majority of the people consisted of boiled rice and vegetables, but not a small number lived on *Singhara* (water-nut), maize and barley. Moorcraft records that *Singhara* constituted almost the only food for at least 30,000 people for five months in the year and the *Nadru* or the stem of the *Nymphae* lotus, of about 5,000 people in the city for nearly eight months. This is a striking proof of the poverty and low standard of life among the lower class people.

Peasants lived in dwellings which were worse than cow-houses of this day. Even the best house in the Lolab valley could afford no better shelter in rain than a chenar tree. These huts were made like log cabins and were covered with mud plaster. Moorcraft's description of a typical village in the Lolab valley runs as follows :

"The people of Sugam were almost in a savage state. The men were in general tall and robust ; the women haggard and ill-looking. The houses were mostly constructed of small trees, coarsely dove-tailed together and coated with rough plaster inside. A flat planking was laid over the top, resting on the walls, and above that a sloping roof was constructed, open at the ends, the space being either filled with dry grass, or serving to give shelter to poultry. The interior was divided by partitions of wickerwork, plastered into three or four dirty small apartments."

Vigne's description is hardly more favourable. He visited Kashmir in 1835. Shopyan was a "miserable place, bearing the impression of once having been a thriving town. The houses were in ruins." Anantnag was "but a shadow of its former self." The houses presented "a ruined and neglected appearance, in wretched contrast with their once gay and happy condition." The villages had fallen into decay. The rice-fields remained uncultivated for want of labour and irrigation.



## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### GULAB SINGH AND HIS SUCCESSORS

PICTURESQUELY situated on the summit of the first sloping ridge that rises from the plains of the Punjab, Jammu, the winter capital of the State, has a history dating back to the epic and Puranic periods.

From olden times it has been the seat of a Rajput dynasty which ruled over a small principality extending over a few miles around it. The two lakes, Mansar and Siroinsar, a little to the east of the city, have given to its inhabitants the name 'Dogra', a corruption of the Sanskrit "Dogirath" (two lakes). Jammu, however, appears to have been the most important and influential of the twenty-two tiny Dogra States which comprised the hilly country extending from the plains of the Punjab to the snowy range of mountains bounding the Kashmir Valley on the south, and now known as the Jammu Province.

These Dogra principalities are said to have been founded by Rajput adventurers from Oudh and Delhi, about the time of Alexander's invasion, when they moved up north to oppose the Greeks.

#### JAMMU THROUGH THE CENTURIES

The earliest mention of Jammu in recorded history is in connection with Timur's invasion in 1398 A.D. At that time these petty principalities were engaged in quarrels among themselves, but they combined against Timur's forces, who however, drove them into the hills. During the Mughal period, these Dogra chiefs appear to have carried on as feudatories of the Emperors, retaining a large measure of freedom in the management of their fiefs. Of Sangram Dev, *Tuzk-i-Jehangiri* contains several references, one of which mentions him as "the Raja of Jammu having a *mansab* of 1,500 personnel and 1000 horse."

After a varied fortune, the principality of Jammu had, by about 1760, acquired a fairly stable government under an enlightened ruler, Raja Ranjit Dev, a Dogra prince who succeeded to the throne in 1750, and continued to hold prominence in the politics of Jammu and outside for thirty-one years.

With the decline of the Mughal Empire and the consequent political chaos, the Punjab and adjoining areas were the victims of

marauding hordes, and there was no security of life and property. Ahmad Shah Abdali's repeated invasions from the north and the Maratha incursions from the south reduced the 'land of the five rivers' to the plight of a 'no-man's land'. This gave an opportunity to Ranjit Dev to extend his authority over all the hill states situated between the Chenab and the Ravi and also over some that lay to the west of the Chenab. His kingdom extended to the plains bordering northern Sialkot.

In pursuance of his objective of carving out an independent State free from Mughal domination, he did not hesitate to extend his active support to Ahmad Shah Abdali, and for his help against Raja Sukh Jiwan, Ahmad Shah gave him a Jagir.<sup>1</sup>

#### RAJA RANJIT DEV

Towards the end of his rule Ranjit Dev had acquired sufficient strength to seriously consider an invasion of the Kashmir Valley. Haji Karim Dad's tyrannical rule had goaded the people of the Valley to seeking aid to overthrow him, from whichever quarter it could be procured. A few members of the leading Kanth family, as well as the chiefs of the Khakha and Bomba tribes of the Baramula Valley, sent secret emissaries to Ranjit Dev, promising him active aid if he attempted an invasion. In 1779, while Haji Karim Dad was busy subjugating Skardu, the Jammu Raja launched an attack over the Banihal pass. Karim Dad's Afghan forces, however got timely intelligence and ambushed the invaders, so that Ranjit Dev's army had to retreat in disorder.

Ranjit Dev gave an orderly and peaceful administration to his subjects at a time when all around was chaos and insecurity. Jammu thus became a centre of entrepot trade between the Kashmir Valley, Afghanistan, and Central Asia, and the rest of India. Rich bankers and businessmen from Lahore and Delhi set up their branches there, and very soon Jammu acquired an importance and prosperity that it had never experienced before.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sufi, *Kashir*, p. 755

<sup>2</sup> George Forster who happened to stay in Jammu in 1783 A. D. observes :

"Runzeid Deve, the father of the present chief of Jumbo, who deservedly acquired the character of a just and wise ruler, largely contributed to the wealth and importance of Jumbo. Perceiving the benefits that would arise from the residence of Muhammadan merchants, he held out to them many encouragements and observed towards them a disinterested and honourable conduct..... The Chief of Jumbo went farther than the forbearance of injuries: he avowedly protected and indulged his people, particularly the Muhammadans, to whom he allotted a certain quarter of the town which was thence denominated Mughalpur; and that no reserve might appear in his treatment of them, a mosque was

The independence of Jammu under Raja Ranjit Dev was, however, short-lived. It was overwhelmed by the rising power of the Sikhs. In 1780, one of the leaders of the Bhangi *misl*, Jhanda Singh, led a strong army against Ranjit Dev, and retired only after extracting tribute from the Jammu ruler.

Ranjit Dev was unfortunate in respect of his sons. The eldest, Brij Raj Dev, was of dissolute character and, in order to save the kingdom from falling into his unworthy hands, he nominated his second son, Dalil Singh, as his successor. Brij Raj Dev approached the leader of Sukarchakia *misl*, Charat Singh, for help, who while leading an assault on Ranjit Dev's forces, was killed by the bursting of his matchlock. The rival *misl* of Bhangis who were aiding the Raja, also lost their leader, Jhanda Singh, who was shot dead by the partisans of the Sukarchakia *misl* while riding in the camp. His death ended their quarrel, and the rival forces retired from Jammu.

#### JAMMU UNDER SIKH RULE

After Ranjit Dev's death, Brij Raj Dev could not hold against the rising power of the Sikhs for long. Mahan Singh, father of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who had succeeded to the leadership of the Sukarchakia *misl*, at first became friendly with the new Jammu ruler. Fortified by this alliance he thought he might regain some of his estates lost to the Bhangi Sirdars but who, on being attacked, secured the help of the Kanheya *misl*. Mahan Singh attacked their camp, but he was defeated and along with Brij Raj Dev compelled to pay tribute. Some months later the two rivals combined in attacking Jammu on the pretext of the tribute having fallen in arrears. Mahan Singh forgetting his vows of friendship to both Brij Raj and his new ally the Kanheya chieftain, sacked Jammu and retired with great spoil. Brij Raj Dev had to submit and pay an annual tribute of 50,000 rupees. He continued to maintain the semblance of government but his hold on the hilly districts of the interior disappeared. On his death he was succeeded by his one-year-old child Sampuran Dev, under the guardianship of Mian Mota, a cousin of Brij Raj Dev. Sampuran Singh died at the age of eleven and was succeeded by Jit Singh, the son of Brij Raj Dev's younger brother, Dalel Singh.

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erected in the new colony.....He was so desirous also of acquiring their confidence and esteem that when he was riding through their quarter during the time of prayer, ne never failed to stop his horse until the priest had concluded his ritual exclamations. An administration so munificent and judicious at the same time that it enforces the respect of the subjects, made Jumbo a place of extensive commercial resort, where all descriptions of men experienced, in their persons and property, a full security."



Raja Jit Singh proved to be an incompetent man, and his wife who was an ambitious and intriguing lady, took the management of affairs in her own hands. Finding the small State torn by internal dissensions, Maharaja Ranjit Singh ordered in 1803 Bhai Hukum Singh his trusted lieutenant, to reduce Jammu and annex it to the Sikh State and thus the whole province came directly under the Lahore Government. It was only twelve years later that the Jammu principality was retrieved by another scion of the family—Raja Gulab Singh who, with his remarkable bravery in the field and diplomatic skill, slowly built up Jammu, extending its frontiers far into the east and north of the Valley, and after incorporating the latter into his dominions founded the present State of Jammu and Kashmir.

### MAHARAJA GULAB SINGH

At about the time when Jammu finally passed into the hands of Ranjit Singh, a young boy of sixteen left his ancestral home in Jammu to seek his fortune by the prowess of his sword. Gulab Singh, the adventurous youth, was the son of Mian Kishore Singh who lived mainly on his Jagir near Samba, 24 miles to the south of Jammu city. Mian Kishore was the grandson of Surat Dev, a younger brother of Ranjit Dev who had two more sons, Dhyani Singh and Suchet Singh.

Gulab Singh was born in 1792 and early in his childhood was sent to live with his grandfather, a stern old warrior, who gave him a thorough training in all manly arts. He could at an early age ride a horse like a cavalry trooper and wield his sword with deadly effect. He was also a sharp and accurate marksman.

After taking service under a Jagirdar, Gulab Singh went to Lahore in 1809 where he was taken into Ranjit Singh's service as the commander of a small force. It was the year when Ranjit Singh signed the famous treaty with the British at Amritsar. Thenceforth he launched several campaigns against the Afghans and in these Gulab Singh distinguished himself as a military leader and fearless warrior. In the ill-fated expedition of 1814 against Fateh Khan, the Afghan governor of Kashmir, Gulab Singh's regiment played a prominent part. While the Sikhs were retreating ignominiously, Gulab Singh showed the greatest courage in reassembling his forces and bringing them back safely. Next year at the siege of Jullundur he distinguished himself and given additional Jagirs. At the siege of Multan. Gulab Singh's personal bravery in recovering the dead body of a Ranjit's favourite Sirdar in the thick of fighting, won him praise and admiration from his master. Gulab Singh thus became one of the most trusted generals of Ranjit Singh. Dhyani Singh too rose in his favour and was appointed

to the important post of Grand Chamberlain, which gave him great influence over the Maharaja.

At this time the forces of Ranjit Singh were being terrorised in the Jammu district by the intrepid chief called Mian Dido. Receiving tacit support from other Jammu chiefs and their Dogra followers, Mian Dido attacked the Sikh garrison in the Jammu fort. Several expeditions were sent against him, but to no effect. Finally Gulab Singh took upon himself the difficult task of ridding the Sikh ruler of this headache. He was promised Jammu in Jagir if he succeeded in his mission. Gulab Singh began by punishing the villagers who gave him support and finally drove him to the peak of a hill where he was surrounded by Gulab Singh's soldiers who shot him dead.

This act of great military pluck and wise strategy, convinced Ranjit Singh of his being the fittest man to pacify the unruly and difficult province of Jammu. In 1820, therefore, the province was given to Gulab Singh in farm. But on Gulab Singh's representation that it was impossible to collect the revenues without the use of force, he was permitted to keep an army of his own and given the title of Raja.

In 1821 Gulab Singh effected the conquest of Kishtwar more by diplomacy than by the strength of arms. He created dissensions between the ruler and his wise minister, Wazir Lakhpat. The latter escaped to Bhadarwah and Gulab Singh conquered Kishtwar with ease.

Ranjit Singh also entrusted to him the reduction of Rajauri which was under the rule of a Muslim dynasty of Rajput descent. The Raja had deliberately given a wrong advice to Ranjit Singh in his first invasion of Kashmir. Gulab Singh undertook the assignment promptly and succeeded in capturing the Raja.

All these distinguished services to the Lahore Government, were rewarded by the Maharaja with the grant to Gulab Singh and his successors of the principality of Jammu, with the hereditary title of Raja. The installation ceremony at Akhnur, 18 miles to the west of Jammu was presided over by the Maharaja who personally put the saffron *Rajtilak* on Gulab Singh's forehead.

Once installed at Jammu, Gulab Singh preferred to spend most of his time there, using the Sikh means to extend his own authority over his brother Rajputs and eventually over Ladakh. He was fortified by Dhyani Singh remaining continually in attendance upon the Maharaja, ever watchful of his interests. He was a strong ruler and quickly restored order in his State, and with his close, personal supervision of the collection of revenues and their expenditure and his check

over the officials, prosperity returned to the land. He could thus plan expeditions towards the distant mountainous areas of Ladakh and Baltistan.

Most of the credit for the conquest of these important frontier regions goes to his able and devoted general, Wazir Zorawar Singh. Born in a village in the Riasi district of Jammu, Zorawar began his career as a private soldier and being energetic and brave came to the notice of the commandant who sent him to Gulab Singh. On one occasion he brought to the notice of his master the waste occurring in the Commissariat Department and placed before him a scheme by which considerable saving could be effected. This brought him closer to Gulab Singh who entrusted him with the conduct of several campaigns which proved his talent as a commander and scrupulously honest officer.

Gulab Singh's conquest of Kishtwar enabled him to gauge the strength of his troops in mountain warfare, and to equip them accordingly. When he was free from internal troubles and order in Jammu was completely restored he decided in 1834 to attack Ladakh. He made a confidential enquiry from the Company, and, on being informed that the British Government had no objection to his expedition, a well-equipped force was prepared under General Zorawar Singh for this purpose.

#### CONQUEST OF LADAKH

Marching through Kishtwar, the Dogras fought the first battle in the Pushkyun valley where the Ladakhis were defeated. Mustering an army of 15,000 the Ladakhis again marched down to attack the Dogras near Langkartze between Kargil and Suru, but on the approach of Zorawar Singh's forces they fled. They were pursued up to Leh where king Gyalpo frantically requested a British traveller, Henderson, to intervene on his behalf and secure for him aid from the British. But a sharp protest by Ranjit Singh (the overlord of Gulab Singh) to the British resulted in their total refusal of any aid to the Ladakhi king, who had to surrender and pay an indemnity of Rs. 50,000 and a yearly tribute of Rs. 20,000 to the Dogra chief.

The subjugation of Ladakh was followed in 1841 by that of Baltistan. Zorawar Singh who was ever on the lookout for extending his conquests, received a call for help from one of the sons of the ruler of Baltistan who had been deprived of his right of succession by his father. Zorawar at once prepared for an invasion and enlisting a force of Ladakhis sent them under their own generals into Baltistan by the Chorbat pass and Khapalu. Zorawar himself led his own Dogra



force by the Dras and Indus valleys. He had to suffer great hardship in crossing the Indus, but with his persevering nature, he ultimately succeeded in not only crossing it, but enveloping the Balti forces from their rear. The siege of the fort, where the enemy forces had taken their stand, lasted a fortnight and deprived of their water supply the Baltis soon surrendered and Zorawar Singh deposed the king, installing the disgruntled prince as the Raja. The Sikh governors of Kashmir had always been jealous of Gulab Singh's successes in Ladakh, but "Mian Singh, a rude soldier, the governor of the Valley during the commotions at Lahore, was alarmed into concessions by the powerful and ambitious Rajas of Jammu, and he left Iskardu and whole valley of the Upper Indus, a free field for the aggressions of their lieutenants."<sup>1</sup>

In 1841, Zorawar with a force of 5,000 troops marched towards Lhasa to conquer the whole of Tibet. Having overrun the two provinces of Rudok and Gar and proceeded twelve marches inside the Tibetan territory, he was halted. These two provinces which produce the finest wool of Tibet also contained the wealthiest and most sacred of its monasteries held by the Buddhist ruler of Tibet as his most valued possessions. Zorawar by attempting their conquest excited the wrath of the Lhasa government who were able to put more than 10,000 men in the field. At the time of invasion by the Dogras, the Tibetan governor fled to Chang Thong, leaving the post of Rudok and the whole country at the mercy of the invaders. General Zorawar Singh established himself at the sacred Lake Mapham (Mansarowar) and sent detachments all over the country to pillage and one body of troops he posted at Purang to watch the Lhasa forces. These forces now marched on Rudok. Zorawar Singh whose contempt for the Tibetan soldiery was great and who under-rated the strength of the army opposed to him, sent some small detachments of his troops to oppose its advance. These were cut to pieces. The Tibetans, inhabitants of a cold region, had a great advantage over the Dogras of the hot plains of the Punjab. On 12th December, 1841, when the Dogras at a height of 15,000 feet were losing their hands and feet from frostbite and were burning their gun-stocks for lack of fuel, the Tibetans under General Shatra—a member of the family that had been famous in Tibetan Annals for the past 100 years—delivered an assault, mercilessly killing their enemy. Zorawar fought at the head of his troops, was unhorsed, and wounded by a bullet he

1 Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, p. 217. Sir Claude Wade (*Narrative of Services* p. 33, note) represents the Jammu family to have obtained from the British Government on assurance that the limitations put upon Sikh conquests to the west and south by the Tripartite Treaty of 1839, would not be held to apply to the north or Tibetan side in which direction, it was said, the Sikhs were free to act as they might please.

continued to fight gallantly till killed by a spear thrust. Only twenty-five soldiers of his army returned to Kashmir to tell this sad tale. It is, however, noteworthy, that the 700 prisoners were treated well at Lhasa, except one Muhammadan, Ghulam Khan, who had been prominent in the destruction of images and monasteries during the earlier phase of the Dogra incursion.<sup>1</sup>

But Gulab Singh did not accept this defeat as final. Next year a punitive force of 6,000 troops under the command of Diwan Hari Chand and Wazir Ratnu was sent to reconquer Ladakh which had been reoccupied by the Tibetan forces after the defeat of Zorawar Singh. The Maharaja came personally to direct the operations and established his rear headquarters at Nasim Bagh near Srinagar. It may be recalled that the Valley had not come under his rule till then and he was conducting all these operations in the name of the Lahore Government.

After a skirmish at Skardu the Dogra force advanced to Leh where the enemy under the command of Achhanjut and Karam Shah gave battle but were badly mauled by the Dogras. Achhanjut was taken prisoner and brought to Srinagar before Gulab Singh. Negotiations were opened with the Tibetans and finally a treaty was signed whereby the old frontiers were agreed to be the boundary line between Tibet and Gulab Singh's dependency of Ladakh; and the traders of both the countries were granted reciprocal concessions.<sup>2</sup> Achhanjut was set free and sent to Lhasa with presents for the court there.

But although Ladakh came permanently under the Dogras as a result of this treaty the pacification of the vast areas took a considerable time. The intrigues of the Lhasa Government to foment trouble for the Dogras continued upto as late as 1891 and the Maharaja's Government had to keep a strict watch over the movement of the Lamas across the various passes.

#### BRITISH INTERFERENCE IN LADAKH

Long before Kashmir came under the rule of the Dogras in 1846, the British had cast their covetous eyes on the territories lying beyond it. As early as 1774 Warren Hastings while sending Mr. Bogle to

1 Sir Charles Bell, *Tibet Past & Present*.

It is interesting to note that at about this time a similar tragedy occurred to the British forces stationed in Kabul, after the 1st Afghan War.

2 At Amritsar in March, 1846, when Gulab Singh was finally inaugurated as Maharaja of Jammu, he exhibited the engagements with the Lama of Lhasa drawn out on his part in yellow and on the part of the Chinese in red ink and each impressed with the open hand of the negotiators dipped in either colour instead of a regular seal or written signature...J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*.

Tibet on an exploring and political mission, had under Article 7 of his secret commission directed him to find out the political and commercial relations then existing between Kashmir and Tibet.<sup>1</sup>

A year after the Sikh conquest of Kashmir in 1819 two enterprising British travellers, Moorcraft and Trebeck, visited Ladakh ostensibly to study the wool trade of Tibet, but actually to gain some first-hand information and if possible a foothold for their countrymen there. Describing this event the Ladakh native chroniclers mention that these two "Sahibs" came to Ladakh via Kulu and Lahoul and gave rich presents to the people and the noblemen and sought an audience with the king. The request for an audience was granted after a great deal of delay. They evinced an interest in the people and their mode of living; and warning the king that the Sikhs would soon attack Ladakh, advised him to establish friendly relations with the British and allow them to build a fort in Leh. The king got suspicious and courteously refused their offer. Moorcraft and Trebeck remained in Ladakh for a year and then returned to India without having achieved any political objective.<sup>2</sup> Soon after in 1834 another British traveller, Henderson, reached Leh and was kept as a hostage by the king impressing thereby the Dogra general Zorawar Singh that he was in direct touch with the British.

The conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan by Gulab Singh though looked upon with disfavour by the British brought the boundaries of the Raja up to the Tibetan frontiers. The British had been powerless to check him but when in 1841 Gulab Singh sent his forces into Tibet, a great stir was caused in Calcutta and the British Indian Government looked apprehensively on the increasing power and prestige of the Dogra chief.<sup>3</sup> They sent a strong note to the Sikh Government at Lahore saying therein that they believed Ngari Khorsum to "belong to China and hearing of the invasion of the territories by the Dogras, they had decided that the Dogras should evacuate the territories they had seized in order to avoid complications with the Chinese Government." Accordingly the 10th of December 1841 was fixed for the surrender. A British officer, Capt. J.D. Cunningham, was sent to see that the decision was carried out and Zorawar Singh was accordingly recalled. But before the order could reach him he and his forces had been

1 C.R. Markham : *Narrative of the Mission of George Bogle to Tibet* ; p. 8.

2 Francke : *A History of Western Tibet*.

3 His fame travelled to far off corners of Central Asia. Abdul Rahim Khan, Raja of Badakshan, addressed a *murasila* to Gulab Singh describing the riches of Badakshan; and expressing his desire to enter into friendly alliance with the Maharaja Sahib—*Kashmir Govt. Rec. File No. 47*.



annihilated by the Tibetans.<sup>1</sup>

In 1846 when as a result of the treaty of Amritsar, Gulab Singh was made the absolute master of Jammu and Kashmir state, it seemed to the British that the hope of plunder and "the desire of revenge might tempt him to repeat the expedition of 1841 into Lhasa territory." The British thought that such an act would embarrass their peaceful relations with the government of His Celestial Majesty due to the latter's ignorance of any distinction between the rulers of India and Kashmir. Accordingly they pressed the Maharaja to delineate once for all the boundary line between his and Tibetan territories and despatched Alexander Cunningham to carry out this work. The latter stayed on in Ladakh for a considerable time carrying out geographical, ethnic, mineral and philological surveys of the whole district. He also kept a close watch on the happenings on the other side of the Karakoram range and collected valuable information of a political and geographical nature from the various travellers to Central Asia and Tibet. But Gulab Singh would not tolerate his presence there for long and he had to return.

#### ANCIENT TIES BETWEEN KASHMIR AND LADAKH

The history of Ladakh is closely connected with the history of Kashmir. The earliest notice of Ladakh is by the Chinese pilgrim Fa-Hian (400 A.D.) who travelling in search of a purer faith found Buddhism flourishing there, the only novelty to him being the prayer cylinder, the efficacy of which he declared was incredible. We learn from the *Rajatarangini* that Ladakh and Tibet were invaded by the great Lalitaditya and brought under the control of the Kashmirian king. The victories over the Tibetans were annually celebrated by the Kashmiris till as late as the time of Kalhana (12th century A.D.). Alberuni (11th century) mentions that this celebration took place on the second of the month of Caitra.

After the assassination of king Ralpachan (877-901) the Augustus of Tibet, Langdharma succeeded to the throne. His reign is chiefly remembered for his relentless persecution of the Buddhist faith. He had a legitimate son from a lesser queen named Odshrung (about 925-950 A.D.) and also an illegitimate son of the great queen called Yumstan who seized the government of Central Tibet at his father's death. The children of Odshrung were robbed of their possessions by Yumstan and they fled to Ladakh where with the help of a little band of followers, they established an independent kingdom.

<sup>1</sup> J.D. Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, pp. 256-58.

Early in the 14th century A.D., Rinchin, an adventurer from Ladakh, came to the Valley and taking service under Kota Rani, gradually rose in position until he finally seized the throne of Kashmir. Influenced by the preachings of Bulbul Shah, a Muslim saint, he accepted Islam and adopting the name and title of Sultan Sadr-ud-din became the first Muslim ruler of Kashmir. Sultan Shihab-ud-din (1354-1373 A.D.) brought Ladakh and Baltistan under the sway of Kashmir, by defeating the ruler of Kashgar, who taking advantage of the disturbed conditions in the Valley had sent his forces there.

Sultan Sikandar of Kashmir (1389-1413 A.D.) sent an army for the conquest of Ladakh under his former minister, Rai Magrey who had grown too powerful for him and whom he expected to perish in those cold regions. But success attended the arms of Rai Magrey which raised his reputation and strength and finally feeling himself safe he proclaimed his independence. Sikandar marched with a large army and inflicted on him a crushing defeat. Rai Magrey was seized and put into prison and Ladakh restored to normalcy by Sikandar himself.

Under his son, the great Zain-ul-abidin, Ladakh remained a dependency of Kashmir, the Sultan conquering parts of Tibet as well. In about 1451 A.D. he sent his son Adam Khan as his governor of Ladakh.

After Zain-ul-abidin, Kashmir again witnessed a succession of weak rulers and was a prey to a long spell of internal strife, which encouraged Sultan Sayyid Khan of Kashgar to invade Ladakh. He sent an army under Mirza Haider Dughlat, a kinsman of Babar, who after occupying Ladakh, marched an army to Kashmir in about 1531 A.D. His stay in the Valley was, however, brief.

Feeble attempts to bring Ladakh back into Kashmir fold seem to have been made by the Chak rulers of Kashmir. During the reign of Ghazi Chak (1561-1563 A.D.) he sent his governor to Ladakh to rule it on his behalf.

When Kashmir came under the rule of the Mughals in 1586 A.D., Ladakh fell into their orbit of political influence. Though chiefly concerned with the rehabilitation of the Valley, Akbar could not remain a passive spectator of the happenings across the Zojila. On his second visit to Kashmir he personally directed operations against Aju Rai the then ruler of Ladakh and succeeded in replacing him by a nominee of his own, Ali Rai, the ruler of a neighbouring principality.

About the middle of the 17th century, Ladakh was threatened with an invasion by Qalmaqs, descendants from a branch of the Mongol race, and the ruler of Ladakh being himself unable to drive them out sought help from Shah Jehan. The emperor sent an army

from Kashmir which crossed the Indus at Khalatze on two wooden bridges and marched to Bazgu village. The Mongols who had taken up their position on the plain of Jargyal between Bazgu and Nemo were defeated after a fierce battle. In return for his aid, the king of Ladakh promised to give to Kashmir the monopoly of the shawl-wool trade. But soon after the return of the Mughals to Kashmir, the Mongols again came down on the Ladakhis and the king had to submit to them and pay tribute.

Aurangzeb was determined to teach a lesson to the recalcitrant chief and when he visited Kashmir in 1665 A.D. he threatened to invade Ladakh. Bernier who accompanied Aurangzeb to Kashmir on this visit has left an interesting account of the whole episode. Says he :

“At the threat of the invasion the king of Ladakh despatched an ambassador to Aurangzeb in Kashmir. The embassy was accompanied by various presents, the productions of the country, such as crystal, musk, a piece of jade and those valuable white tails taken from a specie of cow peculiar to Ladakh which are attached, by way of ornamentation to the ears of the elephant... The ambassador's train consisted of three or four cavaliers and ten or twelve men, dried up and looking mean, with very scanty beards like the Chinese, and common red caps such as our seamen wear... The ambassador entered into negotiations with Aurangzeb and promised on the part of his master that a mosque should be built in the capital wherein prayers in the Muhammadan form should be offered ; that the coin should bear on the one side the impress of Aurangzeb ; and that the Mughal should receive an annual tribute. But no person doubts that this treaty will be totally disregarded as soon as Aurangzeb has quitted Kashmir and the king of Ladakh will no more fulfil his stipulations than he did those of the treaty concluded between him and Shah Jehan.”

After the dismemberment of the Mughal Empire, Kashmir passed into the hands of the Afghans and Ladakh again reverted to its former independence till its conquest by Gulab Singh in 1834.

#### FOUNDING OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR STATE

With the conquest of Ladakh and Baltistan, Gulab Singh's dominions enveloped the Kashmir Valley from the south and the east, and he thus became the sole controller of trade in shawl wool on which the economy of Kashmir depended. He had for long cast covetous eyes on the Valley and when in 1841 he was deputed to restore order following the assassination of the governor, Mian Singh, by the



mutinous Sikh troops, he, by installing Ghulam Mohi-ud-din as governor made him a creature of his own, and punished the mutinous regiments with such severity that he became the virtual master of the Valley. From then onwards his sole aim was to acquire its possession in fact and in law, and thus become the ruler of a consolidated State on the frontiers of India.

At Maharaja Ranjit Singh's death in 1839, the three Jammu brothers were at the height of their power. Dhyani Singh was the Dewan at Lahore; Gulab Singh controlled all the hilly country inhabited by the Dogras; and Suchet Singh was the Commander of a large Sikh force. All the brothers played a prominent role in the tragic drama that was being enacted at Lahore, after Ranjit Singh's stern hand was removed by Death.

Kharrak Singh who succeeded his father to the throne of the Punjab appointed Dhyani Singh as his chief minister. But soon the new Maharaja came under the baneful influence of his favourite, Chet Singh. Dhyani Singh and Gulab Singh not willing to be overshadowed by the court favourite killed him in the presence of his patron. This, however, did not improve matters for them, as Nao Nihal Singh, the new Maharaja's son, dominated over his father. Both he and Kharrak Singh made an exit from the stage, the Maharaja dying of his excesses on 5th November, 1840, and his young son the same day by an accident.

At once several rival claimants to the throne clamoured for recognition and sought the help of the Jammu brothers. Whereas Dhyani Singh favoured Sher Singh, a reputed son of Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh took the side of Kharrak Singh's widow, Chand Kaur. After a bitter fight in which Gulab Singh distinguished himself by organising the defence of Lahore against Sher Singh's forces, a compromise was effected between the rival claimants. Gulab Singh marched out of Lahore and went to Jammu to look after his State.

"In 1841 disaster overtook the British arms in Afghanistan. The garrison at Jalalabad was being besieged, and to relieve it a British force was equipped at Peshawar. The cooperation of the Sikhs was necessary. To obtain this, Major (later Sir Henry) Lawrence was sent to Peshawar. To cooperate with the British expedition which was being organised on the frontier, the Lahore Government very reluctantly deputed Gulab Singh, who was at that time at Hazara."<sup>1</sup> Here he took the fullest advantage of his powerful position and the distress of the British, and ingratiated himself with Sir Henry Lawrence, in the hope of securing British help in acquiring an independent status for his newly formed

1 Panikkar, *Founding of the Jammu and Kashmir State*, p. 49.

State of Jammu. Being a far-sighted politician, he visualized the early breakup of the Sikh State, and its annexation by the British, and rendered valuable services to the expedition for which he earned the gratitude of the British.

The Lahore Government fell into disorder following the death of Chand Kaur in 1842. Sher Singh who was now without a rival to his authority was chaffing under the domination of Dhyani Singh. The faction inimical both to Sher Singh and his minister, fanned the fire of hatred between the two with the result that both Sher Singh and Dhyani Singh were killed. The partisans of Jammu Rajas prepared for war under Suchet Singh and Hira Singh caught hold of the murderers and despatched them to death, and put Duleep Singh, another reputed son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, on the throne.

But after some initial successes in gaining control over the turbulent army of the Sikhs, Suchet and Hira Singh also met their death at the hands of an assassin. Rani Jindan and her paramour, Lal Singh, now controlled the destinies of the Lahore Government. An army was sent to crush Gulab Singh, and though he resisted the Sikh forces for some time, he had to submit and was imprisoned at Lahore. But with his popularity with the troops, he escaped and fled to Jammu, from where surrounded by his loyal servants and troops, he watched the fast moving political drama being staged at Lahore.

How the Rani Jindan and Lal Singh pushed the Sikh army into war against the British is well known to every student of Indian history. Gulab Singh, however, had no hand in these moves, and although invited by the Rani to lead the Sikh army, he declined the offer on the plea that the Lahore Government had been harsh on him and his family, having been responsible for the murder of his brothers and nephews.

#### TRANSFER OF KASHMIR TO GULAB SINGH

"When, however, the campaign was going against the Sikhs and the demand for his return was unanimous, Gulab Singh arrived in Lahore."<sup>1</sup> He realised the dark consequences of the war for the Sikhs and immediately entered into negotiations with the British Government with a view to securing as honourable a peace as possible before it became too late. The battle of Sobraon, fought on 10th February, 1846, was the most fiercely contested battle that the British had ever fought in India, and though the British victory was decisive, they suffered heavy casualties. They were, therefore, also anxious to bring

<sup>1</sup> Panikkar *Op. Cit.* p. 92.

about a negotiated peace. At the same time they realised the necessity of conciliating Gulab Singh who had a fresh and disciplined force of Dogras under his command, which if brought into action against them would have proved disastrous to their interests.

Sir Henry Lawrence, therefore, sent a cryptic note to Gulab Singh to meet him at once. When they met, Lawrence told Gulab Singh "that the Governor-General had promised to grant him the hilly district, together with the country of Kashmir, after having separated them from the Government of the Punjab, and that Gulab Singh would be recognised as an independent ruler."<sup>1</sup>

Gulab Singh continued the negotiations on behalf of the Lahore Government and succeeded to secure for Duleep Singh "what was in the circumstances a reasonably moderate treaty. Known to history as the Treaty of Lahore, and signed on the 9th March, 1846, it contained a clause to the following effect :

"In consideration of the services rendered by Raja Gulab Singh of Jammu to the Lahore State towards procuring the restoration of the relations of amity between the Lahore and British Governments, the Maharaja hereby agrees to recognise the independent sovereignty of Raja Gulab Singh in such territories and districts in the hills as may be made over to the said Raja Gulab Singh by separate agreement between himself and the British Government with dependencies thereof which may have been in the Raja's possession since the time of Maharaja Kharrak Singh ; and the British Government, in consideration of the good conduct of Raja Gulab Singh, also agrees to recognise his independence in such territories and to admit him to the privilege of a separate treaty with the British Government."

This separate treaty was signed at Amritsar on 16 March, 1846, between Maharaja Gulab Singh and the British Government. According to clause I of the treaty, the British Government "transfers and makes over for ever in independent possession to Maharaja Gulab Singh and the heirs male of his body all the hilly or mountainous country with its dependencies situated to the eastward of the River Indus and west-ward of the River Ravi including Chamba and excluding Lahul, being part of the territories ceded to the British Government by the Lahore State according to the provisions of Article IV of the Treaty of Lahore, dated 9th March 1846." In consideration of this transfer the Maharaja had to pay to the British Government "the sum of seventy-five lakhs of Rupees (Nanukshahee)." The Maharaja

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1 *Ibid* p. 96.



became, according to another Article of the Treaty, a vassal of the British and in acknowledgment of their supremacy had to pay a token tribute.

Thus it was that Kashmir came under the rule of Maharaja Gulab Singh. "Surprise has often been expressed," writes Younghusband, "that when this lovely land had actually been ceded to us, after a hard and strenuous campaign, we should ever have parted with it for the paltry sum of three-quarters of a million sterling." The reasons are to be found in a letter from Sir Henry Hardinge to Queen Victoria. The Governor-General writing from near Lahore, nearly three weeks before the signing of the Treaty, said that it appeared to him desirable "to weaken the Sikh State, which has proved itself too strong" by making arrangements by which "Cashmere may be added to the possessions of Gulab Singh, declaring the Rajput Hill States with Cashmere independent of the Sikhs of the Plains." In 1846 all that the East India Company wished was to curb their powerful neighbours, and they thought they would do it best by depriving the Sikhs of the hilly country, and by handing it over to a ruler of a different caste.

But although Gulab Singh became the nominal ruler of Kashmir, he did not get actual possession of his new province without difficulty. His forces sent under the command of Wazir Lakhpat were opposed by the Sikh troops of the governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-din. A battle was fought at the foot of the Sankaracarya hill in which Wazir Lakhpat was killed, and his followers forced to take shelter behind the ramparts of the Hari Parbat Fort. On hearing this Gulab Singh appealed to the British for help and a force was despatched under Sir Henry Lawrence to help him to establish his rule in Kashmir. On learning of British help to Gulab Singh, Imam-ud-din left the Valley along with his troops, and would have been severely punished by the British in Lahore, had he not produced the written instructions to him from Lal Singh to oppose Gulab Singh's forces in Kashmir. Lal Singh was forthwith dismissed from the chief ministership and sent to Ludhiana under heavy guard.

The Kashmiris, however, were not strangers to the Dogras. Mention of close contacts between the people and rulers of Jammu and of the Kashmir Valley is often made in the *Rajatarangini*. During the time of the Sultans, Jammu and adjacent territories had political relations with Kashmir and their rulers entered into matrimonial relations with one another. Sultan Ali Shah (1413-20), for instance, was married to a daughter of the ruler of Jammu. Zain-ul-abidin's (1420-70) second wife was a Jammu princess and she bore him four sons. During the popular movement in Kashmir

against the domination of the Sayyids, a contingent of Jammu soldiers under their ruler came to their help. Under the Mughals there developed closer relations between the people of Jammu and Kashmir Valley, inasmuch as the most important trade routes between Kashmir and Delhi passed over the Pir Panjal and Banihal passes. And when the Kashmiris were groaning under the tyrannical rule of the Afghans, Jammu offered a place of refuge to the thousands of harassed Kashmiris fleeing from the inhuman treatment of their masters.

#### GULAB SINGH'S REGIME

Conditions prevailing in Kashmir when Gulab Singh took it over were deplorable. The Sikh rule had not appreciably improved the lot of the people and the last five years of their regime, due to weakening control of their Central Government, proved to be ruinous to the people. Petty intrigues and quarrels as between the governor and the military commander encouraged the officials to freely tyrannise over the common people and amass wealth quickly. There was no security of service, appointments and dismissals of officers following in quick succession. The rule of the last governor, Sheikh Imam-ud-din was the worst of all. He was a weak ruler whose one aim in remaining at the head of the administration was to amass a huge fortune. Diwan Kripa Ram a former governor used to remit twenty lakhs of rupees to the Lahore Court, but this sum fell to only six lakhs during Sheikh Imam-ud-din's time. His habit of issuing contradictory orders has become proverbial.

As can well be imagined, the economic chaos in the land prevailed to the utmost. Baron Schonberg who visited the Valley at this time gives a sad picture of the people. The tiller of the soil paid heavily in taxes. The artisans and weavers of shawls were in an equally miserable condition. The daily wages of a shawl weaver were four annas, of which half was taken by the governor in taxes, and for the remaining two annas, he was paid in kind (*Singharas* or paddy) from the government depot at a very much enhanced rate than prevailing in the open market. A shawl weaver was forbidden by law to change his employer, the *Karkhandar* or proprietor of the factory.

Cultivation of land had fallen to the minimum. The people already decimated by the famines of 1832 and 1838, continued to emigrate to Amritsar and Ludhiana, even though there were stringent restrictions on the free movement of people across the passes. The common people lived mostly on *Singhara*, the water chestnut, which grew naturally on the various lakes of Kashmir, but which also was subjected to an iniquitous tax. The Sikh soldiery whose pay was

always in arrears added to the annoyance of the Kashmiris.

At this time the shawl trade was at its zenith. The shawl had become an article of fashion in Europe, particularly in France, and enormous quantities were exported by rich *Karkhandars* through their agents in Lahore and Calcutta. Even "General Ventura once traded in these shawls and had great numbers woven"—so lucrative was this trade. Consequently the number of people employed in the manufacture of shawls was very large and on it depended the economy of the country. The miserable condition of the shawl weavers and other artisans is therefore a clear mirror of the low economic conditions prevailing in the whole of the State.

All land virtually belonged to the Sikh ruler but for the sake of popularity some of the governors signed away large Jagirs to their favourites at court. Sheikh Imam-ud-din was the worst offender in this respect. He freely bestowed lands in Jagir to his minions, taking large sums from them as *nazrana* or tribute. The condition of poor tillers can well be imagined than described. A cultivator, for instance, who wished to rent and cultivate a tract of land, was never refused permission to do so. All that was required of him, was to subscribe to the common conditions, namely, giving three fourths of the revenue of the farm to the government. Even the remaining fourth was not wholly his own. It was taxed in various ways. The seed for the crop was supplied by the government but at usurious prices. The position of the tiller of the land was most distressing indeed.

And then he was liable to be forced to work for the government or, a petty official without any payment at all. He was used as a beast of burden, pitiously driven over long and mountain paths, away from his home with no hope of return. A petty official and his beadles would whip his naked shoulders mercilessly. "I have been in many lands", writes Schonberg, "but nowhere did the condition of the human being present a more saddening spectacle than in Kashmir. It vividly recalled the history of the Israelites under the Egyptian rule, when they were flogged at their daily labour by their pitiless task-masters."

To add to the troubles of the Kashmiris, the fierce Bombas and Khakhas, the warlike inhabitants of the Jhelum valley, often raided the country consequent upon the weakening of the Sikh power. The governor was impotent to enforce the authority on these tribes due to his constant quarrels with the military commander. Moreover the soldiery also was a disgruntled class, their pays remaining in arrears for years together. The Galawans, the notorious dacoits of Kashmir, who had been sternly dealt with by the Sikh governor, Mian Singh,



again raised their head and proved a constant terror to the peace-loving Kashmiris.

Lt. Reynell G. Taylor who visited Srinagar in 1846 immediately after Gulab Singh's occupation of the Kashmir *gaddi* gives a graphic description of the miserable condition of the people. "The town presents a very miserable appearance. The houses made of wood and tumbling in every direction. The streets filthy for want of drainage. None of the bazars looked well-filled and prosperous and altogether my ride made me unhappy."

Such was the state of things when Gulab Singh took over Kashmir. It is not difficult to imagine that he had a Herculean task to perform to clean the Aegean stables of administrative and economic ills from which the country was suffering. Though he showed signs of failing health, he set down with determination to the task of consolidating his kingdom on firm foundations.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, as it was officially designated now, differed from other Indian States in that it was totally independent in its internal affairs. Gulab Singh's first problem was to suppress crime ruthlessly and to maintain law and order with a stern hand. He believed in object lessons. He launched an extensive campaign against the Galawans, capturing their leaders and having them executed publicly after a summary trial. Their dead bodies were allowed to remain suspended from the gibbets for months together as a sign of terror to the law-breakers. He drove the Khakhas and Bombas out of the Valley and installed strong garrisons in the forts guarding the passes. Order was restored in every part of the country and every effort was made to render trade and commerce safe for all.

Gulab Singh "brought the principle of personal rule to perfection" says Lawrence, "and showed the people that he could stand by himself. If he wanted their services he would have them without resorting to the old-fashioned device of paying for them by the alienation of State revenues. The State was Maharaja Gulab Singh and as he spent much of his time in Kashmir, and was an able and active ruler, and a fairly wise landlord, the condition of the people improved." But the great difficulty that the Maharaja experienced was with regard to Jagir grants. There were no less than 3,115 Jagirs granted in Dharmarth besides numerous alienations of other kinds. A large number of them were unregistered. The Maharaja is said to have remarked on his first visit to the Valley that he had actually got nothing in return for seventy-five lakhs of rupees, as two-thirds of the area was under hills and mountains and therefore unfit for cultivation and the remaining one third belonged to the

Jagirdars. With the help of some local *raises*, headed by Rajakak Dhar he was able to ascertain the bonafides of the Jagirdars and resumed the lands of those who had been newly granted lands in Jagir. This naturally created widespread resentment among the dispossessed landlords against Gulab Singh and his adviser Rajakak. But Gulab Singh did not give in. Taylor, who conducted an independent inquiry, however, states that the Maharaja was inclined to be just and reasonable. "His point", says Panikkar, "was that people who began as revenue farmers should not claim the land they held in farm to be Jagirs; that grants when made should be strictly adhered to : that grantees who were given one acre should not be allowed to possess two on the same *sanad*, and that in cases of treason, rebellion, and gross misbehaviour the Jagirs should be liable to resumption."<sup>1</sup>

He reorganised the revenue and police administration of the Valley into four Wazarats or districts. Experienced and trusted officials were placed in charge of key departments like the Audit and Accounts, the Dagshwal, Commissariat and Police.

#### BEGAR OR FORCED LABOUR

The Maharaja in order to relieve the peasants of a grave injustice undertook the reform of the *Begar* system. It would not be out of place here to mention the origin of this iniquitous custom which reduced the peasantry to a class of slaves. The Kashmir Valley, surrounded by high mountains and in the absence of any other transport, necessitated the employment of large numbers of men for carrying essential commodities into or out of the Valley. And during any large scale military venture huge armies of porters were requisitioned from the countryside. As Kashmir fell into the hands of unscrupulous conquerors and tyrants, payment to the porters was not made and the custom of forced labour or *Begar* developed consequently. The earliest mention of *Begar* is in the *Rajatarangini* (v—172-74) when king Samkaravarman employed villagers to carry the baggage of, and supplies for his armies. There is mention of *Begar* also in the time of Sultan Zain-ul-abidin as well as during the rule of many succeeding Sultans. During the Mughal rule this developed into a regular institution, particularly when huge armies of porters were required to carry the baggage of the emperors and their retinue during their frequent visits to the Valley. Then followed the Afghan and the Sikh rule and these harsh masters were most unscrupulous in the employment of forced labour.

Maharaja Gulab Singh, therefore, tried to rationalize the system and to mitigate some of the hardships it entailed. "His idea was to

<sup>1</sup> *Founding of the Kashmir State*, p. 136.

determine a certain number of men in each village who wanted to be considered liable to do labour when called upon by the government. For this they were to be paid one *Kharwar* of rice per month in pay and free rations when employed. Men not called upon to do *Begar* in the course of the year were only to be paid six *Kharwars* for that year. An officer was appointed to take charge of this work.”<sup>1</sup> Most of the ills of this system, however, continued for some decades more and it was not till 1920 when public opinion against it developed in and outside Kashmir, that the *Begar* system was abolished altogether.

#### RATIONING OF RICE

The most important reform instituted by Maharaja Gulab Singh was the rationing of rice to the city population. Due to its being cut off from the rest of India by high mountains as well as the tyrannous treatment of the cultivators by the government, Kashmir was experiencing shortage of food-grains every now and then. The difficulties of the city population were doubly aggravated by the cornering of the grain by unscrupulous dealers. In order to meet this situation the Maharaja established a rigid monopoly of rice and had it sold at a fixed price to the citizens. This was all the more necessary because the majority of the people were artisans and shawl weavers, who needed to be supplied cheap grains to be able to produce the valuable articles of export on which depended the economy of the Valley.

#### REORGANISATION OF SHAWL DEPARTMENT

The reorganisation of the shawl department was a pressing problem and needed the immediate attention of the Maharaja. The history of this department, though interesting, is rather black. This department was called Dagshawl or Shawl Marking Department. How it came into existence has already been mentioned.

The Dagshawl in course of time also began to regulate the labour employed by every *Karkhandar* or proprietor of a factory. The rich *Karkhandars* made it a point to shift the incidence of taxation on to the shoulders of the weavers. During the Sikh period the *Karkhandars* represented to the Darogah, Ram Dayal, that no sooner had a man learnt his work and probably some of the employer's trade secrets than he rose in value in the labour market and every effort was made by his employer's rivals to secure his service. The practice of enticing away an operative was, therefore, made penal. The shawl weavers were thus in absolute charge of the *Karkhandars*. They became their slaves and were forced to work very hard. Ram Dayal fixed Rs. 98/- as tax per loom

1 Panikkar, *Op. Cit.* p. 136,



and besides gave 20 *Kharwars* of *Shali* per loom at two rupees per *Kharwar*, the market rate being only Re.1/-. This, together with the tax, amounted to Rs. 150/- per loom. The weaver might or might not work, but he had to pay. No wonder twenty-two shawl weavers are said to have cut off their thumbs in order to be disabled to pursue the profession of shawl weaving and thus be saved from the tyrannies of their *Karkhandars*.

In 1846 Sheikh Imam-ud-din, the last Sikh governor gave them a little relief by setting the shawl-weavers free from the bondage of *Karkhandars* and remitting two annas per *Kharwar* in the rate of *Shali* advanced as *niliv*. This revived the industry and during Gulab Singh's rule there were 27,000 weavers working at 11,000 looms. But the wages paid to the workmen were miserably low. Moreover in actual practice the *Karkhandars* managed somehow to keep the workmen under perpetual bondage.

The shawl weavers could bear the tyrannous system no longer. For once they combined and struck work on 6th June, 1847, and asked for a permit to emigrate in body to the Punjab. The Maharaja was forced to act. He called their leaders to meet him and after inquiring into their grievances issued orders for their redress. Now the shawl weaver had to pay only according to the actual work done by him on the loom and could change his employer at will. He was now no longer a serf.

#### BRITISH INTERFERENCE

But Maharaja Gulab Singh was not left entirely at peace to carry out his policy of reform and reorganisation. Almost as soon as he acquired Kashmir he was subjected to strong pressure by the British Indian Government to allow them to have a say in the internal administration of his kingdom.

It has already been stated that the Amritsar treaty was considered by a large number of people in England as a gross blunder. Even though Gulab Singh showed by his most hospitable treatment of British visitors to the Valley that he was their staunchest friend, efforts were made to reduce his authority in the State by raising the question of his inefficient and harsh government of the Valley. In the spring of 1846, shortly after the treaty of Amritsar, Lord Hardinge visited the Valley and on his return to Simla sent a note to the Maharaja stating that the nature of his internal administration aroused misgivings in the mind of the British government and claiming the right on the part of the Company to interfere in his affairs. The object of this communication was to get a Resident appointed at Srinagar, for which no provision had been made in

the treaty of 1846. A British official, Lt. Reynell Taylor, Assistant to the Resident at Lahore, was deputed to Srinagar to make personal inquiries and ascertain whether the Muslim population of Kashmir was satisfied with the rule of the Maharaja. Taylor reached Srinagar on 21st June 1846, and according to Hassan the historian, a big meeting of the people of Srinagar was called at the Maisuma Maidan which was addressed by Taylor who, at the end of his speech, asked them whether they were well governed and whether they would like the continuance of Gulab Singh's rule. Having been previously tutored by Rajakak Dhar, one and all replied in the affirmative and Lt. Taylor had to return a disappointed man. He, however, sent a proposal on the 12th of July, 1846 regarding the control of prices, grant of *rasad* (rations) in Srinagar, rules governing local and frontier Jagirdars and regulation of the shawl industry.

But the British were out for a showdown. On the 9th of June, 1847 Col : Henry Montgomery Lawrence and George Taylor wrote a letter to Gulab Singh complaining of (i) distress of Kashmiris on account of high prices of *Shali* and high-handedness of the officials of the Durbar, (ii) occurrence of four cases of *Sati* in the State, (iii) despatch of forces by the Maharaja to Gilgit and (iv) Dharmarth realisations made by the Durbar from the Kashmiris. The Maharaja, however, welcomed all constructive criticism and frequently acted upon the friendly advice of his English friends like Henry John Lawrence, Capt. Abbot, Capt. Nicholson, John Hardinge and Edward Lake.

On 13th August, 1847, Capt. Cunningham and Mr. Thomas were deputed for the determination of the boundary between the Punjab government and the State. Captain Cunningham then proceeded to Ladakh on a similar mission and remained there for a number of years. During this period Cunningham made an exhaustive study of the topography, language and ethnology of Ladakh.

The real aim of the British pressure on the Maharaja was to make him agree to the posting of a Resident at his court and to give them the right to control his frontier policy. But with the outbreak of the second Sikh war in 1848 these pressure tactics were slackened for some time.

The causes which led to this war and its outcome are well-known to every student of modern Indian history. Chattar Singh who had made an alliance with Dost Mohammad, "sent an agent to the Maharaja at Srinagar, but Gulab Singh advised him against his schemes. Dost Mohammad also sent an agent but the Maharaja refused to receive him". The Maharaja on the other hand offered his help to the British and though looked upon with suspicion at the beginning, the Maharaja was requested to close and guard the passes and to send an army to

fight the Sikhs. At a later date Sir Lepel Griffin accused Gulab Singh of "complicity in the rebellion". But Sardar Panikkar refutes this allegation.

When the British finally pacified the Punjab they began again to cast their longing eyes on Kashmir. European visitors had begun to come to the Valley in ever larger numbers and this was used as a pretext for the necessity of the appointment of a Resident for looking after the interests of the European visitors. In 1851 the proposal was formally conveyed to the Maharaja, who again resisted, protesting that it was a direct violation of the treaty. He had, however, to finally agree to the posting of a special officer "at Srinagar to stay there till the return of visitors in order to put a stop to certain excesses committed by some of them."

Gulab Singh had to face trouble on his northern frontier almost as soon as he acquired Kashmir.

#### REBELLION IN GILGIT

According to the treaty of Amritsar only the hilly country between the Ravi and the Indus was transferred to Gulab Singh, but it was understood that he had been given a free hand to explore the possibilities of any extension of territory towards Gilgit, which had been already under the Sikh rule since 1841.

The Sikh State was induced to the acquisition of this strategic point by the internal feuds of the ruling family. Gaur Rahman, the eldest son of Mulk Imam, the ruler of Yasin, attacked and killed the Raja of Gilgit. This infuriated Karim Khan, the brother of the dead Raja, who appealed to Sheikh Ghulam Mohi-ud-din the Sikh governor of Kashmir for help. The Sikhs seized this opportunity of an extension of their power to Central Asia and sent a strong force under Nathu Shah of Gujranwala and Mathra Dass to the help of Karim Khan. A long campaign ensued during which either side had to undergo great privations. Ultimately Nathu Shah successfully pacified the frontier and took in marriage the daughters of Gaur Rahman and of the Mirs of Hunza and Nagar. Overriding the claims of Karim Khan, who had asked for help, Nathu Shah occupied Gilgit permanently on behalf of the Sikhs.

The declining power of the Sikhs made the position of Nathu Shah very insecure and when Gulab Singh in 1846 acquired Kashmir, he transferred his services to him and was entrusted with the government of the frontier by his new master.

But the frontier chiefs, jealous of Gulab Singh's encroachments



on their freedom, again rose in rebellion. Infuriated at the presence of two British officers at Gilgit, Agnew and Young of the Bengal Engineers, whom Nathu Shah had permitted to enter the area, the Mir of Hunza killed Nathu Shah and Karim Khan. Gaur Rahman finding the field clear, then attacked Gilgit with the assistance of the people of Darel. Maharaja Gulab Singh sent troops from Kashmir which were reinforced by those stationed at Astore and Skardu and they defeated Gaur Rahman. Bhup Singh and Sant Singh the two officers of Gulab Singh remained in charge of the Gilgit area and conducted the administration peacefully for four years. In 1851, however, Bhup Singh with a force of 1500 soldiers was lured into an ambushade at the Niladar hill by the sons of Gaur Rahman named Mulk Aman, Mir Mali, Mir Ghazi and Pahalwan Bahadur who were assisted by the Hunza Raja and his followers. Eleven hundred of Bhup Singh's forces were killed and the rest taken as prisoner and later sold as slaves. Only one Gurkha woman by crossing the river reached Bunji to tell this sad tale. Sant Singh suffered a similar fate and thus all the territories to the right of the Indus were lost to Maharaja Gulab Singh.

#### AND IN CHILAS

Trouble also broke out in Chilas. In 1851 the Chilasi tribesmen carried out a marauding expedition into the Astore valley and carried away a large number of people as slaves. The Maharaja despatched a strong force in the spring of 1852 under the command of Diwan Hari Chand, Mian Hatu and Colonel Bijay Singh. The Dogra force had, however, to face stubborn resistance from the Chilasians who inflicted severe losses on them. Colonel Devi Singh's column was annihilated and Mangal Singh and Colonel Bijay Singh received severe wounds. The Dogras, however, laid siege to the fort of Chilas, but the country being barren the besieging army had to depend on rations sent from Kashmir. These were speedily exhausted and the soldiers were forced to eat "the leaves of trees and barks of plants." The Dogras, however, fought on vigorously. Finally their winter supply being exhausted, the Chilasians sued for peace. Their leaders were brought to Srinagar, where they accepted the Maharaja's authority and left back their sons as hostages.

Maharaja Gulab Singh had to face one more organised attempt at the disruption of the State. The British who were bent on creating troubles for Gulab Singh in order to weaken him, now resorted to their favourite strategy of creating schism in the ruling family. Towards the end of his life, one of his cousins, Jawahar Singh, the second son of his brother Dhyani Singh was encouraged to a rebellion

in his Jagir at Jasrota and to appeal to the British at Lahore for the restitution of one half of the State to him. The Maharaja took vigorous measures against the rebel and despatched a large force under Colonel Hari Chand and Colonel Bijay Singh and the strongholds were reduced. Meanwhile he sent Diwan Jwala Sahai to Lahore to plead his case. The British who were inclined to concede Jawahar's claim later on came to know that he was in correspondence with Afghanistan. Jawahar's estate was confiscated and he was interned at Ambala where he died.

#### GULAB SINGH'S ACHIEVEMENTS

Further British intrigues against Gulab Singh were, however, arrested due to the outbreak of the Mutiny. A wise and farsighted politician as he was, Gulab Singh realised early that his position as the ruler of the most important frontier State of India could only be maintained with the British help and if their authority got weakened he would be the first to suffer. He, therefore, advised Ranbir Singh whom he had installed as a full-fledged ruler in February, 1856, himself leading a secluded life in Kashmir, to send all possible help to the British in this hour of their supreme need. Accordingly he ordered Diwan Jwala Sahai to proceed to Rawalpindi and offer all resources of the State to the British Government in his name. The offer of military and financial help was accepted, and Maharaja Ranbir Singh together with Diwan Hari Chand was ordered to go with a large force to help in the siege of Delhi. The Kashmir forces proved of help to the British and suffered great losses. Maharaja Ranbir Singh had to return early due to the death of Gulab Singh in August, 1857, but Diwan Hari Chand was killed in action outside Delhi.

That Gulab Singh was a shrewd opportunist nobody can deny. Having risen from the lowest rung of the ladder to a conspicuous height is, however, no mean achievement. In a court bristling with intrigues and rivalries, Gulab Singh found a fertile field to bring into play his intelligence and shrewdness.

This, however, does not cover his faults ; and "where his interest required he did not hesitate to resort to tricks and stratagems which would in ordinary life be considered dishonourable", is admitted even, by his biographer, Sardar Panikkar.

Gulab Singh's greed for money has earned him a low reputation. "With the customary offering of a rupee as *nazar*", says Drew. "anyone could get Gulab Singh's ear. Even in a crowd, one could catch his eye by holding up a rupee and crying out '*Maharaj arz hai*', that is, 'Maharaja, a petition'. He would pounce down like a hawk on the money, and having appropriated it, would patiently hear out the

petition. Once a man, after this fashion making a complaint when the Maharaja was taking the rupee, closed his hand on it and said, 'No; first hear what I have to say.' Even this did not go beyond Gulab Singh's patience. He waited till the fellow had told his tale and opened his hand. Then taking the money, he gave orders about the case."

There is a psychological background to this greed for money in Gulab Singh. He naively believed that as he had purchased Kashmir in consideration of seventy-five lakhs of rupees, he had to amass this capital as well as its profit in as short a time as possible. But he was a wise landlord and proceeded in a methodic manner. The people got a spell of peace and order after decades of chaos and lawlessness, and naturally their condition improved, despite the severe taxations of Gulab Singh. He meted out justice expeditiously and was frequently touring the State punishing corrupt and tyrannical officials. But his preoccupations with frontier wars and the British intrigues to raise trouble in the State, did not give him enough time to properly organise a stable and ordered governmental machinery. That fell to the lot of his son, Ranbir Singh.

Maharaja Gulab Singh is the only Indian ruler to have carved out a State for himself during the 19th century out of the wreckage of the great kingdom of the Sikhs. Moreover he is the only Indian ruler to have extended the frontiers of India to their natural boundary. His conquest of Ladakh is a landmark in the development of India as it is today.

Gulab Singh was a devout Hindu. He prohibited the killing of cows in the State and laid the foundations of a religious trust called Dharmarth. He built numerous temples in Jammu and Srinagar and was also the founder of a new town, Purmandal, near Jammu. Apart from this there are no great architectural buildings to his credit.

"On the whole", says Tanikkar "Gulab Singh led a pure life. The court of Ranjit Singh was dissolute in the extreme and the Sikh ruler did not hesitate to exhibit himself in public in a drunken State. The morals of the Lahore Durbar were such as to shock even a corrupt age. But Gulab Singh was not given to these excesses. For the age and the circumstances of his time he led a life which could in no sense be considered dissolute."

### MAHARAJA RANBIR SINGH

Maharaja Gulab Singh's death was not followed by any major disturbance in the administrative set-up or composition of his newly-



founded State, as generally happened on such occasions during those uncertain days with princely States carved out by enterprising adventurers or military commanders. No doubt the stability of the State was mainly due to its being under the protection of the British who had been instrumental in its foundation. An additional factor was the wise decision of the late Maharaja to formally install, when his health began to fail, his only surviving son, Ranbir Singh, on the *gaddi* in February, 1856, and himself accept the governorship of the Valley. The *Rajtilak* ceremony was attended by several princes and nobles of the Punjab and the British put their seal of approval on his accession to the *gaddi* in the lifetime of his father, by presenting costly gifts to the new Maharaja.

Born in 1829 A.D., Ranbir Singh passed his youth in the company of his father and took part in several of his campaigns in and around his State. This, together with the thorough training given to him by his father in manly arts, made Ranbir Singh a proficient soldier and an efficient commander. He did not devote much time to acquiring literary education, but what he lacked in this was amply compensated by his sharp memory, quick grasp of facts, sterling moral character and polished manners.

He was married at the young age of fourteen to a daughter of Raja Bijay Singh of Seeba. The marriage celebrated in great pomp was attended by his two uncles and their large retinues. At that time they were at the height of their power, being virtually the king-makers of the Punjab.

Three years later, his father added Kashmir Valley to his growing State and became the ruler of a large and important frontier region of India. Gulab Singh was naturally called upon to consolidate his newly acquired territories, and Ranbir Singh assisted him by taking over the administration of the Jammu Province. And thus at twenty-eight when his father died, he was sufficiently experienced to take upon himself the arduous duties of the ruler of the largest princely State of India.

#### ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS

During his reign there was a steady improvement in the economic condition of the people, but it was very slow. The Maharaja himself was extremely popular with his people, but unfortunately he had not the officials capable of the immense labour required to remove the terrible effects of many centuries of misgovernment, "and especially of the harsh, cruel rules of the Afghans and Sikhs". The officials were accustomed to the old style of rule and knew no better. They believed

not in helping the people to produce wealth by sympathetic treatment, but in extracting the last farthing out of them to fill the coffers of the Maharaja and their own pockets.

The land tenure of the Valley was in a hopeless mess and the collection of land revenue was primitive and conducive to killing all incentive among agriculturists to till the land. Maharaja Ranbir Singh's first concern was to effect improvements in this and he attempted to change the old system and assess land revenue at a fixed amount. But no sooner was the reform introduced than the officials turned this very measure into a means of speculation. There was widespread distress in the land. The Maharaja, when he came to know of it, immediately toured the Valley to assure the cultivators of his sympathy towards them. While camping at Achhabal he personally attended to the complaints of the wronged peasantry and the officials were compelled to return all the money they had squeezed out of the impoverished people. But no sooner was the Maharaja's camp struck than the officials indulged in their usual game of robbing and harassing the cultivators.

Ranbir Singh also attempted to introduce a number of reforms in the administration of the State. He set up three main departments—the revenue, the civil and the military—with clearly-defined spheres of work. New sub-divisions were created for both civil and revenue administration. The judicial system was reorganised and a penal code was drawn up on the lines of Macaulay's code in British India. Appeal courts were set up both at Jammu and Srinagar and nearly thirty subordinate courts functioned in the State. Justice was inexpensive and it required only half a rupee worth of stamp to have a case heard by the Maharaja himself. He would "examine and sharply cross-examine the witnesses" and often refer the matter to a magistrate for investigation. Crime of all kinds was, however, rare chiefly because of the remembrance of the terrible punishments of Gulab Singh's time and because of the system of fixing responsibility for undetected crime upon local officials.

The Maharaja took steps to promote trade and commerce. He, moreover, realised the importance of good communications both inside the State and with the rest of the country. A few pathways and roads were constructed. Half a lakh of rupees was spent on repairing the "paths," and the construction of the cart road between Rawalpindi and Srinagar was begun towards the end of his rule. Similarly, a path between Jammu and the Valley was built. A telegraph and postal service was instituted.

In agriculture a number of new staples were introduced. Money was freely spent on vines, wine-making and hops. So was the case with the development of a silk industry. Silk-worm seeds, imported from China, were distributed among villagers. Experimental tea gardens were laid out and iron and coal worked in some localities in Jammu.

#### DECLINE OF THE SHAWL INDUSTRY

The shawl industry received his special attention. There were 27,000 weavers working on 11,000 looms. The head of the Shawl Department, Pandit Rajakak Dhar was supposed to recover and pay to the State twelve lakhs of rupees. The weavers had thus to pay Rs. 49 each and they were again kept under the charge of *Karkhandars* or manufacturers and none could leave the one for another master. The result was that after working from morning to night a shawl weaver could get no more than four pice in wage per day. A weaver could thus earn seven or eight rupees per month out of which he paid five rupees in tax which left him with three rupees to live on. A lazy and sickly weaver could earn only two or three rupees per month and could not pay the tax and thus became a debtor to the Government.

This intolerable condition of the weavers forced them to unite and proceed in a body to the residence of the governor where they intended to present him with a petition for the redress of their grievances. Rajakak Dhar, however, misrepresented this move and convinced the governor that the processionists would attack his house and kill him. This roused his fury and he quickly brought out a company of soldiers to disperse them. In the stampede that followed a number of shawl weavers jumped into the river, twenty-eight of them getting drowned.

The Maharaja came to know of the discontent prevailing among the shawl-weavers. In 1868 A. D., he remitted Rs. 11/- from the tax of Rs. 49 and three years later, when the shawl trade was on the decline due to fall in demand of shawls following the Franco-German War, reduced the price of paddy that the shawl weavers had to purchase from State granaries. But no amount of remedial measures could revive the industry which the taxation policy of the rulers, the Franco-German War and the famine of 1878-79 killed outright. The Maharaja realising that it was a dead industry abolished the tax altogether, retaining only a nominal duty on the export of shawls. This too was remitted in 1886 by his successor, Maharaja Pratap Singh.

#### PATRONAGE OF ART AND LETTERS

Maharaja Ranbir Singh was a patron of learning and art. His



court attracted learned men from all over India. He gave a donation of one lakh of rupees when the idea of establishing the Punjab University at Lahore was first mooted, and when the University came into existence, he became its first Fellow. He also donated liberally to Sanskrit institutions at Banaras and made provisions from the State for students who studied there. He established several schools, *Maktabas* and *Pathshalas* in Jammu and Srinagar and some of the towns in the State. He took a personal interest in the progress of education. George Buhler who visited the Valley in 1875 in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, writes in his *Report* :

“He (Maharaja Ranbir Singh) was good enough to take me to his *Muddrissa* (School) and to allow me to examine some of the pupils in his presence. The active manner in which he took part in the examination showed that he was well acquainted with the subjects taught and that he took a real interest in the work of education. This *Muddrissa* which is the chief educational institution in Kashmir, contains besides a Sanskrit College where poetry, poetics, grammar and philosophy are studied, Persian classes and school of Industry. Mathematics are also taught, according to a Dogra translation of the *Lilavati*. I examined several classes in Sanskrit, Euclid and Algebra, and most of the boys did very fairly.”

A splendid monument to his zeal for religion and letters is the Raghunath Temple at Jammu. Constructed shortly after his accession, the temple became a centre of learning and research. Here were established a Sanskrit College, a magnificent library and a translation bureau. A large number of Sanskrit and Persian books, printed and in manuscript, were translated into Dogri, Hindi and Urdu. Most of the Sanskrit texts written in the Sarada script of Kashmir were transcribed into Devanagari. The library contained over five thousand manuscript volumes. Some of them were also printed in the Vidya Vilas Press, the first in the State, which the Maharaja established. In a reference to Ranbir Singh's educational policy, the celebrated research scholar and antiquarian, Sir Aurel Stein observes : “Translation into Hindi of standard works, selected from the whole range of *Dharshanas*, the *Dharma*, and other *Shastras*, were executed and partly printed, with the object of spreading a knowledge of classical Hindu learning among the Maharaja's Dogra subjects. Again Persian and Arabic works on historical, philosophical and other subjects were translated into Sanskrit with the assistance of competent *Moultvis* in order to facilitate that exchange of ideas which the Maharaja in a spirit of true enlightenment desired to promote between the representatives of Hindu and Mohamadan scholarship in his dominions.”

## THE FAMINE OF 1878-79

But his efforts towards ameliorating the economic condition of the people and promoting intellectual and literary activities among them, were nullified by the doings of his officials and servants, who, living still in an old time economy, did not cooperate in carrying out his modernistic reforms. The standard of living among the people was very low, the means of communication were rough and rude. There was still much waste land which the people were unwilling to put under cultivation, because under the existing system of land revenue administration they could not be sure that they would ever receive the fruits of their labour. "Upon every branch of commerce there was a multiplicity and weight of exactions. No product was too insignificant and no person too poor to contribute to the State."<sup>1</sup>

No wonder in 1877, when—through excess of rain which destroyed the crops—famine came to the land, neither were the people prepared to meet the emergency, nor were the officials capable of mitigating its effects, and direful calamity was the consequence.

Continuous rains which fell from October, 1877, till January, 1878, destroyed the autumn crops, waiting to be harvested or lying in the fields. Normally these should have been stored safely long before October, but the old system which delayed reaping operations for revenue collection, was directly responsible for the catastrophe. The rice and maize which were then hurriedly cut were stacked wet. Combustion set in and the grain became black and rotten. When it was evident that there would be no rice or maize for food, the officials became nervous and ordered to sell at cheap rates the grain collected in revenue and stored by the government, without husbanding a portion for seed purposes. As the winter drew on the plough-cattle died for want of food. Middlemen and corrupt officials did the rest, the latter resorting to house searches in the villages for grain which created panic and resulted in its complete disappearance from the Valley. For rather than make over their scanty stocks to greedy and unprincipled officials the villagers hid their grain in the damp earth or sunk it in the river.

The one hope at the beginning of 1878 lay in the spring crops of barley and wheat, but heavy rain injured the harvest, and of the poor remnant very little was allowed to go to the cultivators. The same rain damaged the fruit crop and when the hungry people had devoured the blossoms of the apples and pears, and the unripe fruit of the mulberries, they turned to grasses and roots of the swamps and forests. Those near

<sup>1</sup> Younghusband, *Kashmir*, p. 260.

the forests lived on herbs while the skim milk lasted, but herbs without milk soon proved fatal, and by the summer of 1878 famine was raging and corpses lay strewn about, unburied, and prowling dogs began to prey on these. The famine took an enormous toll of human life and it has been calculated that three-fifths of the total population of the Valley perished. "Many attempted to escape to the Punjab, but at the barriers troops were stationed to prevent the migration of the people. At the end of 1878, however, the old system of *Rahdari* under which no man could leave the Valley without permission, was given up, and some of the weak survivors tottered over the passes to the Punjab, many dying in the way."<sup>1</sup>

The Maharaja, however, spared no money in procuring grain from the Punjab which was brought with great difficulty over the long, bad roads. But unfortunately the officials turned the Maharaja's attempt to save the lives of his subjects into a source of profit. Until October 1879 all the horrors of famine prevailed, when the crop proved to be a bumper one.

The effects of the famine lasted long, and for years after the Valley did not recover from this awful visitation. "When I commenced the work of inspecting villages in 1889," remarks Lawrence, "there was hardly a village where I did not see deserted houses and abandoned fields, the owners of which had perished in the great famine of 1878."<sup>2</sup>

When the story of the deadly famine filtered through to the Punjab there was an outburst of anger at the mismanagement of affairs in the State, and the British Government getting a handle to condemn the Maharaja's administration tried to plant their own officers in the Valley and on its frontiers. The gravest charges of neglect and dreadful cruelty were brought against the Maharaja. He was accused of having drowned people by boat-loads in the Wular during the famine so as to be saved of the expense of feeding them. But he heroically challenged the base calumny and when an enquiry was instituted he was exonerated.

#### BRITISH INTEREST IN CENTRAL ASIA

In spite of the regard and respect shown by the Maharaja to British officials, diplomatic relations were not always friendly and at one time his active interest in the affairs of Central Asia, created a doubt in Calcutta about his loyalty to the British Government. In

1 Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 215.

2 *Ibid.*, p. 216.



1873, they revived the proposal to appoint a Resident which Maharaja Gulab Singh had stoutly refused to accept, when it had been put forth by Lord Hardinge in 1848 almost immediately after handing over the Valley to him. In a well-reasoned communication Maharaja Ranbir Singh pointed out that there was no provision in the treaty which gave authority to the British Government to appoint a Resident. But with the increasing apprehensions of the extending Tsarit Empire towards India, British activities on the trans-Himalayan areas increased day by day. At the same time, however, they did not consider it advisable and politic to altogether eliminate the sympathies of the Maharaja's government by riding rough-shod over his wishes, and, therefore, they withdrew for the time being their claim to the planting of a Resident at the Kashmir Court.

Ranbir Singh, however, was not a passive spectator of the moves and counter-moves that were taking place on his frontiers. He too sent his trusted officials and agents to explore the vast regions of Central Asia and Persia. Mehta Sher Singh an officer of great dash and pluck, travelled deep in Central Asia in 1866-67, and on his return submitted an interesting and illuminating diary of his travels. The same year another State officer, Mohammad Khan Kishtwari, also travelled extensively in these regions and submitted a report of his tour. Kadir Joo and Mian Salab Singh went to Yarkand in 1864 on a political mission on behalf of the Maharaja. A military officer named Soba Khan Bandooki went to study the military disposition of the Chinese in Central Asia and submitted a comprehensive report of his findings to the Maharaja's Government.<sup>1</sup> After studying all these reports of his spies in, and of political mission to Central Asia, the Maharaja was emboldened to take advantage of the disturbed state of political conditions in these regions and asked permission of the British Government to despatch a military expedition to Yarkand and Kashgar and attempt to incorporate these two cities and the territories adjacent to them into his own dominions.

"However in 1865, the Jammoo Government despatched a small body of troops across the Karakoram, with orders to occupy the country as far as Shahdula or Shadula, and to build and garrison a fort there, which was done. Shahdula is about three days' journey beyond the Karakoram pass. The fort was provisioned and occupied by Jamoo troops during the summers of 1865 and 1866, the force being withdrawn in the winter on account of the severity of the climate." But the British who had already begun to cast doubts on the loyalty of Ranbir Singh did not countenance these activities of his and sent him a strong note of

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir Government Records, File Nos. 296, 332, 379, 536.

disapproval. They had formulated their own plans for a long-term policy of commercial penetration to, and subsequent political domination of Central Asia.

During the twenty years following the Crimean War, Russia traversed 600 miles eastwards. Chimkent was occupied in 1864, Tashkend in 1865, Khojand in 1866, Yani Kurgan in 1867. The Khanate of Bokhara was brought within the Russian sphere of influence, Samargand was occupied in 1868 and the Russians entered Khiva in 1873. Galvanised to frantic activity by these developments, the British began their counter moves. The part played by them in fomenting trouble in Chinese Turkistan towards the end of the 19th century is a matter of common history. It was in 1870 that Ranbir Singh was persuaded to appoint Mr. Drew and later in 1871 Mr. Johnson as his commissioners for the district of Ladakh. It was during these years significantly that the revolt of Yaqub Beg took place resulting in the establishment of his short-lived independent State of Kashgaria and Yarkand.

#### THE FORSYTHE MISSION TO YARKAND

So high was the political stock of the Kashmir Government in Central Asia during this period that most of the communications addressed to the British passed through the Kashmir Durbar;<sup>1</sup> and it was to the Maharaja's Court that the first envoy of Yaqub Beg came in 1872 with presents from his master. The Maharaja however directed him to see the Viceroy and as a result of this the famous mission of Douglas Forsythe was despatched to Central Asia which paved the way for later British Indian commerce with these regions<sup>2</sup>

By giving an impression that it was a joint mission of the British and Kashmiri officials that would be sent to Yaqub Beg, the Maharaja was induced to give all assistance in the way of supplying provisions, carriage and active co-operation to the Forsythe Mission. There were

“altogether 1621 horses and yaks employed and 6476 coolies of whom 1236 were dooly bearers. These men and cattle were distributed over the different stages and kept for about two months on this duty until the arrival and passage from Murree of Haji Tora and his suite.”<sup>3</sup>

1 See Owen Latimore : *The Pivot of Asia*.

2 Kashmir Government Records : File Nos. 486B & 757A-B.

3 H.W. Bellew : *Kashmir & Kashghar, A Narrative of the Journey of the Embassy to Kashghar in 1873*.

On the successful return of the Mission, the Maharaja was further pressed to enter into a "commercial" treaty with the British Government in 1873, according to which a British Joint Commissioner was appointed at Leh to look after the upkeep of the road and the safety of travellers to Central Asia.<sup>1</sup> The Maharaja could not thereafter levy any toll or duty on goods sent from British India or abroad to Central Asia and *vice versa*. The Maharaja had to pay a sum of Rs. 5,000/- in the first instance for carrying out repairs to, and thereafter to make annual contributions for the upkeep of the road and the various *Serais* or rest houses for travellers. British Indian or Central Asian nationals could start provision and carriage-supplying business at any stage on the road without let or hindrance on the part of the Maharaja. Elaborate rules were framed for the maintenance of law and order and dispensing of justice in these areas. The British were empowered to carry out survey operations and the Maharaja was entitled to depute his officials to work with the British parties.<sup>2</sup> In short, the whole conduct of relations both political and commercial with the Central Asian, Chinese and Tibetan Governments was taken over by the British. And although the Kashmir envoy made his usual triennial trips to Lhasa till as late as 1882, the Maharaja's influence and prestige in these regions were completely destroyed.

The Maharaja was also pressed by the British to grant a Jagir in Kashmir to Haji Yaqub Tora, the envoy of Yaqub Beg, and to this effect a *sanad* dated Samvat 25th Magh, 1931, corresponding to 8th February, 1877, was granted to Yaqub Beg by the Maharaja.<sup>3</sup>

In recognition of all these friendly services rendered to the British Government and to the Forsythe Mission, Her Majesty Queen Victoria was graciously pleased to present to Maharaja Ranbir Singh with a small steam launch of the type usually carried by the ships of the Royal Navy ! Since this was the first boat of its kind to be brought into Kashmir, it evoked a great deal of enthusiasm and curiosity among the people so much so that nearly the whole population of Srinagar came out to witness its passage down the Jhelum.<sup>4</sup>

With the appointment of the British Joint Commissioner in Ladakh and a political officer in Gilgit was ushered in a period of total British domination of all the foreign relations of Kashmir with the

1 *Ibid.*

2 Bates : *Gazetteer*.

3 Kash. Govt. Rec : File No ; 486, B.

4 The boat has now been placed on view in the garden of the Legislative Assembly. For a detailed account of its first trials in the Dal lake, see Wakefield, *The Happy Valley* : p. 166-67.



Governments of Central Asia and Tibet. A British trade officer was appointed in Kashgar who curiously enough was designated as "Special Assistant to the Kashmir Resident for Chinese Affairs."<sup>1</sup>

#### GILGIT AND CHITRAL

With regard to Gilgit, Chitral and adjacent principalities, Maharaja Ranbir Singh's expansionist policy was similarly interfered with by the British Government. Immediately after the acquisition of Gilgit by Maharaja Gulab Singh in 1846, there broke out widespread trouble there chiefly due to the presence of two British officers deputed by the Maharaja. While Gulab Singh was busy in consolidating his position in the Kashmir Valley, the unruly tribesmen of Gilgit and the adjacent areas rose against his authority and though the State troops at Gilgit made various attempts to bring these frontier chiefs under the subjection of the Maharaja, they, in many cases, met with disaster. But soon after Maharaja Ranbir Singh's accession to the throne, we find the Raja of Nagar starting to pay tribute to the State and receiving as a feudatory a subsidy therefrom.

After the death in 1856 of Gaur Rahman, the chief who had rebelled against Gulab Singh, Maharaja Ranbir Singh deputed General Devi Singh with a large force to reconquer Gilgit. The enemy fled before him and Devi Singh occupied the district as far as Yasin. He then returned, keeping some loyal local chiefs as governors of Yasin and Punial.

In 1859, there was again a revolt in Gilgit against the rule of the Dogras. Maharaja Ranbir Singh despatched a punitive force under the command of General Hushiara to punish the insurgents. The rebels were defeated and their leader Mulk Aman fled to Chitral. Gilgit was permanently annexed to Jammu and Kashmir.

In 1870 agreements and treaties were entered into with the chiefs of Hunza and Nagar, apparently after they had been quelled by the Maharaja's forces. The Chief of Nagar gave a guarantee of safety for trade and commerce between Gilgit and Nagar and kept hostages at Gilgit as a guarantee for good conduct and for regular payment of tribute. The Raja of Hunza gave a similar undertaking and was granted a subsidy of Rs. 2,000/-a year. He agreed to make over the revenue of Chaprot to the Maharaja, apparently in lieu of the transfer of the fort itself.

Meanwhile events on the north-west frontier of India were moving fast. The Afghan War was in the offing and the British were

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1 Mr. George Macartney was the first official appointed to this post.

anxious to isolate Afghanistan and eliminate any possible threat from Chitral. This area was also attracting the attention of Tsarist military experts. The Russian government made no secret of their desire to hoist the Tsar's flag on the frontiers of Kashmir. The Afghan government too were exerting pressure on the Mehtar, threatening him with invasion. The British were, however, so situated that they were helpless to render him any assistance directly to meet this threat. They, therefore, encouraged Maharaja Ranbir Singh to take over the obligation and to accept the position of suzerain over Chitral and to hold out the assurance of assistance to the Mehtar. Negotiations were opened between the officers of the Maharaja and the Mehtar, which eventually resulted in a treaty between Aman-ul-Mulk, the Mehtar, and the Maharaja. According to the treaty the Mehtar accepted the suzerainty of the Maharaja, and in token thereof agreed to pay annually a small tribute. The Maharaja on his part had to pay him an annual subsidy of Rs. 12,000.

But things were not to remain quiet in this region of perpetual intrigue and political turmoil. Soon the Mehtar failing to carry out some of his engagements to the Maharaja was involved in a military conflict with the State forces as well as of some smaller principalities tributary to the Maharaja. The net result was that some of his territories were detached from his rule and handed over to more loyal chiefs. Koh, Ghizer and Ishkoman came directly under the Maharaja's rule after these districts were severed from Chitral.

Not being happy with the influence created by the Maharaja on the frontier, and in order to be informed of the latest moves of Russia across the Pamirs, the British in 1877 deputed captain Biddulph as Officer on Special Duty at Gilgit. The Agency remained in Gilgit for four years—until 1891, when it was withdrawn, the necessity for its continuance being then past with the installation by the British of a new ruler in Afghanistan.

#### THE END OF AN ERA

Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign witnessed the successful conclusion of the Trigonometrical Survey of the State and the preparation of its map in 1861. The Trigonometrical Survey of India commenced its operations in the State during Maharaja Gulab Singh's rule when Lt. Col. (afterwards General) Waugh was the Surveyor-General of India. The Survey in the Valley and the frontier was supervised by Major Montgomerie and after his death by Mr. J. Peyton.

An event of far-reaching consequence was the establishment in 1881 of a Church Missionary School by Rev. Doxey, who was succeeded

by Rev. J.H. Knowles. This ushered in an era of modernism in education which made the Kashmiris realize their own abject condition and later to fight for their destiny. The foundation of a hospital by the Medical Mission of the same Society also brought much-needed relief to the suffering masses in the State. Both the Educational and Medical Missions set up noble traditions in selfless service to the people, and those of the Kashmiris who joined these institutions as teachers or doctors have maintained these traditions ever since.

Though devoted to his religion, Maharaja Ranbir Singh was kind and tolerant to the Muslims to whom he allowed the free exercise of their religion. In 1872 there was an outbreak between the Sunnis and Shias, apparently on sectarian basis, but in reality on economic grounds. There was a severe depression in the shawl industry following the Franco-German War of 1870 when the French market was lost, and the shawl weavers who were mostly Sunnis were hit very hard. Their discontent took a violent turn and they attacked and looted the rich manufacturers and traders who belonged mostly to the Shia sect. The Shia localities were gutted and looted by the impoverished Sunnis. The Maharaja soon quelled the disturbances and gave three lakhs of rupees in compensation to the Shias.

In his private life the Maharaja was "certainly free from the many frivolities and vices which but too often disfigure the private conduct of oriental Princes".<sup>1</sup> And Mr. Drew has given a pleasant picture of how the Maharaja in the old fashioned way "so liked by the people and so conducive of good relations between rulers and subjects, used to sit daily in public Darbar in full view of his people, receiving and answering his people's petitions."<sup>2</sup>

The ghastly famine of 1878-79 darkened the latter part of his reign, as also did the disease from which he never recovered. On the 15th of September, 1885, he breathed his last at Jammu and was succeeded by his eldest son, Maharaja Pratap Singh.

1 *Diaries*, Vol. II, pp. 142-43.

2 Younghusband, *Kashmir*, pp. 156-157.



## CHAPTER TWENTY

### DAWN OF MODERNISM

MAHARAJA PRATAP SINGH's accession to the *gaddi* is a landmark in the history of modern Kashmir. During his long reign of forty years several progressive reforms were carried through. The land revenue was properly assessed and fixed in cash for a definite number of years and the share claimed by the State was greatly reduced. A first-rate cart-road down the Jhelum Valley and another over the Banihal pass were built, linking the Valley with the rest of India. Heavy taxes on trade were reduced. Increased, though not sufficient, attention was paid to education. A scheme for drainage of the Valley, reclaiming waste land and preventing floods was put into operation. Srinagar, Jammu and a few more towns were electrified. The administrative machinery was completely overhauled and a humble beginning was made in giving representation to the people in the two municipalities of Srinagar and Jammu.

#### MAHARAJA PRATAP SINGH

All this was achieved with the help and prompting of the British Resident who was appointed immediately on the death of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. From that date the conduct of the internal administration of the State, and the watch and ward of its northern and eastern frontiers became directly the concern of the British Indian Government. How they succeeded in gaining this dominating position is a sad but interesting story of political intrigue and base diplomacy.

#### BRITISH CONTROL OVER THE STATE

Two factors were directly responsible for this development—the new Maharaja's unimpressive figure and indifferent health, and the legacy of the vigorous forward policy of Lord Lytton's Viceroyalty. At a time when Afghanistan and its northern frontiers were being subjected to the onslaughts of the rising wave of Tsarist Russia, the British in India were in no mood to respect the treaty obligations with a princely State which they considered to be their own creation.

Born at Riasi in 1850 A.D., Pratap Singh received education in Dogri, Sanskrit, Persian and English. In his youth he was entrusted

by his father with the duties of hearing petitions from people and passing suitable orders in consultation with some of his experienced officials. In this way he got acquainted with the working of various departments of administration. When Lord Ripon visited Kashmir in 1881, Pratap Singh was deputed to receive him at the border and to look after his comforts. In all these assignments Pratap Singh showed his capacity for hard work and intelligent planning. But his unimpressive physique—lean and short—and his submissive nature weighed heavily against him, and there were misgivings about Pratap Singh's ability to govern efficiently.

The fateful year 1885 which coincided with Maharaja Pratap Singh's accession to the *gaddi* was surcharged with tension on the north western frontiers of India. Lord Dufferin on his assumption of the Viceroyalty of India was faced with the problem of the demarcation of the northern boundary of Afghanistan with Tsarist Russia. During the negotiations over the disputed boundary line, occurred the famous "Panjdeh Incident" which brought Russia and Great Britain to the brink of 'war in all parts of the world'. Indeed when the news came that the Russian General Komaroff had attacked and driven out the Afghan garrison of Panjdeh, hardly any responsible person in England at the time thought that the danger could be averted. "Popular opinion was greatly inflamed against Russia, there was something approaching a panic on the stock exchange, the Conservative opposition were clamorous for strong action, and Gladstone, the Liberal Prime Minister, speaking of the situation as one of extreme gravity, asked for and readily obtained a vote of credit for eleven millions."<sup>1</sup>

Though the 'Panjdeh Incident' ended peacefully, it convinced the British of the importance of strengthening their control on the frontier regions, and thus Kashmir came in for their special attention. We have already noted that both Maharaja Gulab Singh and Maharaja Ranbir Singh opposed vigorously the appointment of a British Resident at their court. There was, however, placed a seasonal Officer on Special Duty in Srinagar ostensibly to look after the interests of European visitors to Kashmir, but in reality to keep a watch on the doings of the Maharaja and his officials. When death removed the late Maharaja from the scene, the Government of India took the first opportunity to establish a British Residency in Srinagar, for which they had already made definite plans. In a letter dated April 7, 1884, to the Secretary of State for India, the Government of India stated that the establishment of a Residency in Kashmir was "a measure which may be called for, not merely by the need for assisting and supervising

1 P.E. Roberts, *History of British India*, p. 474.

administrative reforms, but also by the increasing importance to the Government of India of watching events beyond the North Western frontiers of Kashmir."

On September 14, 1885, shortly after the new Maharaja's accession to the throne, the Viceroy sent a despatch emphasising that it was essential in the interests of good government that the Maharaja introduced certain reforms in his administration and accepted a British Resident in Srinagar. The Maharaja, jealous of encroachment on his powers, wrote in protest: "I do not hesitate to admit that the existing state of affairs in Cashmere urgently requires the introduction of substantial reforms in the administration of the country, but I beg to assure you that nothing shall be spared on my part to prove beyond any possibility of doubt that it is my ambition to make my country a well-governed State in alliance with the Government of India." But the new Maharaja's vigorous protests were of no avail, for the appointment of a Resident on Ranbir Singh's death had been decided upon much earlier. In his report to the Secretary of State in 1884, Lord Ripon had made a definite assertion of this decision. "The British", he wrote, "did not take the action earlier conceiving that a favourable opportunity would present itself on the occurrence of a fresh succession—an event which seemed unlikely to be long postponed. When that event takes place we consider that it will be our duty to impress upon the Cashmere Government its obligations to its own subjects, and to see that the reforms which are so urgently needed are no longer postponed."

Sir Olivier St. John, the first Resident, was succeeded in March, 1888, by C. Plowden. The latter an intriguing and vigorous officer of the Political Department at once set about planning the deposition of the Maharaja and the outright annexation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### DEPOSITION OF THE MAHARAJA

Plowden in his note to the Viceroy reported that the Maharaja was imbecile and lacked intelligence, and that he would thwart all attempts to improve the administration. He, with the help of the Maharaja's younger brother, prepared some letters, purporting to have been written by Pratap Singh to his trusted servants to kill the Resident by poison, and revealing treasonable correspondence with Tsarist Russia. Suddenly the Anglo-Indian press in India came out with the sensational news that the Maharaja of Kashmir was found guilty of treasonable activities. The Indian owned press, particularly the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* of Calcutta took up the Maharaja's cause. The *Patrika*



secured and published a secret note written by the then Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, showing the British anxiety to take the frontier districts of the State under their direct supervision and for that purpose to control the internal affairs of the State. At once there arose a storm in India at this wanton disregard of treaty obligations and, therefore, the idea of deposing the Maharaja was given up. "If we annex Gilgit," wrote Durand to Lord Dufferin, "or put an end to the suzerainty of Kashmir or the petty principalities of the neighbourhood, and, above all, if we put British troops into Kashmir just now, we shall run a risk of turning the Darbar against us and thereby increase the difficulty of the position."

The idea of outright annexation of Kashmir and the deposition of the Maharaja was given up.

Instead, the Resident presented Pratap Singh in March, 1889, with the draft of an *Irshad* or Edict-of-Resignation announcing his own abdication in favour of a Council of Regency, with Raja Amar Singh, his younger brother, as its President. The Maharaja, with great composure of mind, declared that "if his own brothers were determined to ruin him with false accusations, he would submit to his fate. His Highness did not take his meals for two days, he was so much overpowered ; and in his frenzy he saw no room for escape, except to give his consent to such arrangements as were proposed to him."<sup>1</sup>

According to this *Irshad* he was relieved of the effective rulership of the State, which was placed, subject to the control of the Resident, in the hands of the Council of Regency consisting of Raja Amar Singh, Raja Ram Singh, an experienced European officer, Rai Bahadur Pandit Suraj Kaul and Rai Bahadur Pandit Bhag Ram. The President and Members of the Council, which was constituted on 18th April, 1889, were appointed by the Government of India and held independent charge of their respective departments subject to the general control of the Resident who was the final referee in all matters. He might veto any resolution passed by the Council or suspend action thereon pending further explanation.

The Viceroy "accepted" the *Irshad* with the following words : "Notwithstanding the ample resources of your State, your treasury was empty ; corruption and disorder prevailed in every department and every office ; Your Highness was still surrounded by low and unworthy favourites and the continued misgovernment of your State was becoming, every day, a more serious source of anxiety." There was, of course, no mention of the fact that the Imperial Government was

1 Digby, *Condemned Unheard*.

using the plea for people's welfare as a handle to control the State, a vital frontier region of India. William Digby, a Liberal Member of Parliament who strove hard to show that no misgovernment existed in Kashmir, exposed the real basis of this *Irshad*. Said he :

"While misgovernment and the alleged unhappy condition of the people of Kashmir were described as necessitating the action, these were not the whole, and there is grave reason to believe, not the real motives ; the real motives being that fear of Russian aggression India-wards which has led to the commission of so many questionable acts from time to time by the Government of India of the day, while it seems clear there was a desire to obtain complete control over, if not actual possession of, the kingdom of Kashmir."<sup>1</sup>

#### BRITISH POLITICAL AGENCY IN GILGIT

"The key to the whole situation", wrote Digby "was felt in the pregnant words : 'It was Gilgit the Government wanted.' "<sup>2</sup>

And very soon they got it. For it was significantly in the same year (1889) that the Gilgit Agency was re-established and as in the relations between the State and the British government, so in regard to the relations between the Political Agent in Gilgit and the State, a radical change was effected. For, whereas even with the deputation of an Officer on Special Duty in 1877 the State retained complete control over Gilgit both in civil and political spheres, the officer being only an ordinary intelligence officer with no *locus standi*, the Political Agency constituted in 1889 was in sole charge of civil, military and political administration of the district. Stating the reasons for setting up a Political Agency, the Government of India in a despatch to the Secretary of State for India, stated that "the advance of Russia up to the frontiers of Afghanistan, and the great development of her military resources in Asia, had admittedly increased the necessity for strengthening our line of defence, and that among the points requiring special attention were the northern passes of the Hindukush, which afford a difficult but not impracticable route for a force large enough to cause excitement if nothing worse, in Kashmir and among the tribes of Bajour, and perhaps at Jalalabad and on the Punjab frontier."

The *de facto* administration of the Gilgit frontier passed into the hands of the British officers and thus came into being the "Gilgit Agency". The acquisition of administrative control, however, was slow and imperceptible, nor was it categorically announced. It grew mostly due to the unfettered powers enjoyed by the British Resident in Kashmir.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 103.

With the setting up of the Agency came up the question of the reorganisation of its defence. Captain A.G. Durand, the British Political Agent in Gilgit pointing out the miserable condition of the State troops already stationed there, wrote to the Resident from Camp Gakuch on 20th September, 1889, that their salaries were in arrears for years, their uniforms were in a tattered condition and the pay was distributed only when the treasure arrived from Srinagar. The training and equipment of the State army had engaged the attention of the Resident from the date of his assumption of office. Prompt and energetic measures were taken to reorganise it on sound lines and after the reduction of "large masses of this armed rabble", small, compact bodies of "well trained, disciplined and regularly paid troops" came into existence. These regiments, called the Imperial Service troops, trained by British officers, consisted of three regiments and a mule battery, in all two thousand men, mainly Gorkhas and Dogras. A contingent from these troops was sent to Gilgit to man the station there. By 1894 the Imperial Service troops in Gilgit had become an efficient force and "the Dogra officers were very keen and loyal. They were well-fed, disciplined and active."<sup>1</sup>

Along with the establishment of the Agency and the stationing of Imperial Service troops, communications between Gilgit and the rest of India were considerably improved. A "Strategic road" fit for pack ponies and mules was built linking Gilgit with the Kashmir Valley and a telegraph line connected it with the Army Headquarters in India and the Residency in Srinagar. To feed the troops and to build up an arms and ammunition reserve in Gilgit, a semi-government concern, the Gilgit Transport Service, was given the contract for purchase of grains in the Valley and their carriage to Gilgit, as well as to keep the Burzil pass open all the year round. The heavy purchases of rice and wheat in Srinagar, created famine conditions in the Valley. Thousands of Kashmiri villagers, pulled out of their agricultural operations, were forced to carry these supplies at nominal wages. During early spring when the Gilgit road was usually under snow, over 1500 labourers were engaged in cutting a pathway over the Burzil pass. No wonder that "save us from Gilgit" was the prevailing outcry in Kashmir.

#### HUNZA-NAGAR CAMPAIGN

All this feverish activity culminated in the operations against Hunza and Nagar in 1891. The two chiefships bordering on Tsarist-held territories in Central Asia, had been brought under the suzerainty of

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1 Report of Mr. Bruce, British Agent at Gilgit. See file No 21, of 1894, Kashmir Govt. Records.



Kashmir during Ranbir Singh's time and accepted the rule of the Agency when it was set up. They were accordingly paid an annual subsidy of Rs. 2,000. But in 1891 when "the frontier was much excited by the military promenade of the Russians on the Pamirs", the Chiefs rose in organised revolt and marched at the head of their forces to capture the strategic fort of Chalt. Colonel Durand, the Political Agent at the time however, forestalled them by occupying the fort, and the Hunza-Nagar forces withdrew. Colonel Durand commanding a force of Dogra and Gorkha soldiers launched a strong assault on the *Sangars* or breast-work which the tribesmen had thrown up for the defence of their fort overlooking the Nilt nullah. It was by a clever stratagem and personal bravery of these soldiers that the *Sangars* were overcome and the enemy positions captured. The State forces under General Suran Chand bore the brunt of the fighting and so did the State exchequer the expenditure involved in carrying this campaign to a successful conclusion. On 26th December, 1891, the "Nagar Raja and his people made their submission," and "about 700 soldiers of the Raghu Partap Bodyguard and the artillery under Kumedan Hazara Singh were distributed among the forts in Hunza and Nagar."

The army of Colonel Durand then occupied Misghar, the most extreme point to which British influence extended in the north. Having destroyed the power of these Chiefs, the British government appointed them as governors of their principalities by a formal instrument issued in the name of the Maharaja, according to the terms of which the State and the Political Agent reserved practically unlimited rights of intervention not only in the external but also in the internal affairs of the territory. But though the Gilgit Agency advanced the British Imperial interests, the greater part of the expenditure on this account and on the administration of these districts was borne by the Jammu and Kashmir State. The expenditure covered not merely the cost of the maintenance of the Agency and State troops at Gilgit, but also of making roads, establishing dispensaries and schools and other normal functions of administration within the territories themselves. In return for this huge expenditure the State received a moiety of the revenue realised which was nominal in value, the total amount realized being itself insignificant.

Not only for Gilgit but for the Black Mountain and Chitral Expeditions, the Kashmir State had to contribute in men and money. Two regiments of the State with a total strength of over 1,500 of all ranks participated in the Black Mountain Expedition.

All this refutes the plea advanced by the British that the deposition of Maharaja Pratap Singh was effected in the interests of the people of the State who badly needed an efficient and honest administration

and the development of the resources of their State.

#### GRADUAL RESTORATION OF POWERS TO THE MAHARAJA

Having achieved their objective, namely, the control of Gilgit and other frontier posts, the British Indian Government began to take a generous view of the restoration of powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh. In 1891 he was appointed the President of the Council, with Raja Amar Singh as its Vice-President. In 1893, the Queen conferred on him the title of the Grand Commander of the Star of India. At the investiture Darbar held in Srinagar the Resident complimented the Maharaja on the "present good government", and his loyalty to the "Paramount Power" shown "especially by the assistance His Highness rendered to the Imperial Government in the Black Mountain Expedition and Hunza-Nagar warfare."

But the Maharaja was only a figurehead. In a letter dated 29th January, 1895, to the Residency Vakil, His Highness bemoans his lot—"I am supposed to be no factor in the machinery of the State and nobody cares for me." In another letter dated 7th September, 1895, he writes : "I am not even allowed to sign papers for the Resident. I cannot even appoint a Tehsildar...Really I am quite helpless, nothing is in my hands."<sup>1</sup>

His appeals to the British for restoration of powers, however, resulted in a minor change in the Rules of Business of the Council in 1896. The Maharaja was given the power to "send for proceedings of the Council" and if he did not agree with any of its decisions or orders he could "refer it back to the Council." Every member had to prepare a synopsis of the work done by him outside the Council and send it to the Maharaja.<sup>2</sup>

By 1905 the Imperial Government had consolidated its position on the North-Western Frontiers of India. The relations with Afghanistan were cordial and Lord Curzon's formation of the new North-Western Frontier Province shifted the responsibility for frontier policy from Calcutta to Peshawar. The British were, therefore, inclined to take another step towards restoration of powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh.

In 1905 the State Council was abolished and its powers of administration conferred on the Maharaja by Lord Curzon himself.

The Maharaja was to be assisted by a Chief Minister, and three other ministers, namely, Revenue, Home and Judicial. All the ministers

1 Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 1 of 1892.

2 *Ibid.*, File No. 48 of 1899,

had to send the cases and their abstracts to the Maharaja through the Chief Minister. An abstract of orders and their disposal was to be sent to the Resident for his approval.<sup>1</sup>

The constitution established under this system provided :

- (i) That the "advice" of the Resident be followed whenever offered,
- (ii) That the budget be prepared and passed in consultation with the Resident,
- (iii) That no Resolution of the late State Council be cancelled or modified without consulting the Residency, and
- (iv) That the appointment of all ministers and any other important officials be made with the concurrence of the Government of India.

In 1909, Raja Amar Singh who had played a prominent part in the political drama of the State passed away. Raja Ram Singh the third brother had already died in 1899. Maharaja Pratap Singh from then on wielded his partially restored powers with greater authority.

During the first world war the Maharaja placed all the resources of his State at the disposal of the British Imperial Government. With the rising tide of freedom movement in India, the British Government was reorientating its policy towards the States which they believed would act as breakwaters during the impending mass risings in India. So Maharaja Pratap Singh's chances of gaining full powers looked brighter, particularly when he was in his old age.

On 18th September, 1920, the Maharaja applied to the Viceroy to restore him the powers which had been snatched away from him in 1889 and partially restored in 1905. He pleaded that he had rendered valuable services during the war and that he was at the fag end of his life. The Viceroy replied that the Maharaja would be restored full powers on condition that he gave a confidential undertaking that he would seek the advice of the Resident in all matters connected with the frontier, important changes in the administration, etc. Pratap Singh protested and said that such an undertaking would in fact be perpetuating the old restrictions on his powers. Subsequently the Viceroy demanded only a confidential undertaking regarding Maharaja's consultations with the Resident on all matters pertaining to the frontier and some important administrative changes. The Maharaja acquiesced and in March, 1921, Lord Chelmsford restored full powers to him in a Darbar held at

<sup>1</sup> Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 90 C/En. Bloc C of 1905.



Jammu.<sup>1</sup>

It appears from the directive issued by the Maharaja to the Chief Secretary that he had an intention of establishing a Legislative Assembly in the State simultaneously with the formation of an Executive Council. But due to outbreak of communal disturbances in the State the constitutional reforms were not implemented. The Executive Council of five members with himself as its President was installed by the Maharaja in January, 1924. All administrative orders were passed by the Members who were apportioned portfolios by the Maharaja. The latter retained the power of veto. The Council continued to function till the Maharaja's death in September 1925.<sup>2</sup>

#### LAND SETTLEMENT

From this brief account of the political events during Maharaja Pratap Singh's reign, emerges the glaring fact that the Imperial Government, determined to control Gilgit and the Ladakh borders, reduced the Maharaja to a figurehead and itself wielded real powers through the Resident. In this process the people of Kashmir incidently made sizeable progress towards prosperity. Several reforms in administration, land settlement and public beneficiary activities resulted from the imposition of a *de facto* British rule. The Resident by actively controlling the administration transformed Kashmir from a medieval to the near-modern age. British officers were put in charge of important departments like the Revenue, Accounts, Police, Forest, and Customs, and they organised them on the Punjab model. But the foremost and beneficial reform which completely changed the outlook of the peasant and gave him a new hope and incentive to work was the land settlement and revenue assessment carried through by Sir Walter Lawrence whose memory is still cherished and revered by the inhabitants of the Valley.

#### OLD SYSTEM OF ADMINISTRATION

The happiness and the welfare of the people in India generally depends almost entirely on the revenue system and the methods of taxation. When Maharaja Pratap Singh ascended the throne in 1885, the system was not only faulty and inefficient, but it was palpably corrupt. There were no records or maps to indicate what a man's holding in land amounted to, or to show what his revenue liabilities were. The *Patwari*, or the village accountant, entered the rough area of a holding of each villager on cramped pieces of paper or birch-bark,

1. Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. : 104, Bloc C of 1920.

2. *Ibid.*, File No. : 239/10, Bloc C of 1921.

hiding them away in the deep pockets of his ample gown. It was often said that the *Patwari* kept three editions of this statement, 'one for himself, which may be supposed to be near the truth, one for the *Tehsildar* and another for the villagers, the two latter being prepared with a view to convincing each side of the excellent bargain he has secured.' The area of the holding was not ascertained by measurement but was calculated by the amount of seed required for each field, and often the headman and influential people in a village were shown as requiring less seed to cultivate their lands with and consequently to be liable to payment of lesser revenue than their poorer brethren who in reality held only a fraction of the areas possessed by the powerful members of the village.

Over the *Patwari* was a *Tehsildar* and one or two *Naib-Tehsildars*. There were fifteen *Tehsils* in the Valley, divided into three districts or *Wazarat*, presided over by officers known as *Wazir-i-Wazarat*. These in turn were subordinate to the *Hakim-i-Ala* or governor with his revenue establishment known as the *Daftar-i-Diwani*.

Land settlement was not, however, new to the Valley. We have already noted that in the early Hindu period land was the main source of State revenue. Then the State was contented with one-sixth of the produce. In the time of the Sultans, the State took one-half. Their Mughal successors, who found the Valley in a ruined condition, considered that one-half of the produce of the country would not suffice for the wants of the troops and city population, and accordingly decreed that the cultivating classes should dispense with grain for three months and should live on fruits, and they accordingly fixed the State's share at three-quarters of the produce of the land.

Coming down to later times we find in 1859 A. D. the Valley parcelled out among *Kardars*, who were land agents of the State, with very large powers. It was the duty of a *Kardar* to get the largest possible quantity of grain for the State, and for this purpose he would arrange the cultivation of his estate in such a way that a family consisting of a man, his wife and adult child who formed a unit for cultivation, would get four acres of irrigated land. After the *Kardar* had made his annual distribution of land, the village passed into the hands of a *Shakdar* whose duty was to sit in the village and watch the crops. Over him was another officer known as *Sazawal* who supervised the work of *Shakdars* of three or four villages. When the harvest-time came, a regiment, known as *Nizam-at-Paltan*, moved into the villages to enforce the State's claim, and this regiment was always supplemented by sepoys from the regular army.

The State took three-quarters of rice, maize, millets, and buck-

wheat, and of oil-seeds, pulses and cotton, the share taken was nine-sixteenths.

In 1880, Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried to make a cash assessment, but it was a cash assessment only in name, and it rested with the *Hakim-i-Ala* to say, year by year, how much of the assessment he would take in cash and how much in kind. And even this reform was defeated in its purpose by the unsympathetic officials who made no attempt to inspect villages or to ascertain the condition of the cultivators and the state of irrigation or of cultivation.

In 1882, the pernicious system of auctioning the land revenue of a village to the highest bidder was instituted. Those who bid for villages knew nothing of the capacity of the village and cared less, for they were speculating on a year's crops, and if they were not good, the successful bidders after taking all they could wring from the villagers, absconded without paying the State a single rupee. Later on came into existence the *Mujawaza* or collection of land revenue in kind for sale to the city population. No wonder the villages ran into enormous arrears of revenue which accumulated year after year, weighing down the poor peasants under a heavy burden.<sup>1</sup>

The machinery to work this defective and pernicious method of collecting land revenue could not but be corrupt and inefficient. Miserably low salaries were paid to the *Patwari* and *Tehsildar* and there was no reward for honest or efficient work. Even the meagre salaries were not paid in cash but in kind. No wonder these officials took the fullest advantage of the opportunities for speculation afforded by this defective system. Besides, they enjoyed other perquisites known as *Rasum*. A typical village had to pay in *Rasum* to the officials as much as Rs. 270 in addition to the revenue. When one considers that each *Tehsil* had an average of 150 to 200 villages, it was not surprising that the officials never grumbled at their low pay, and never complained if their pay was greatly in arrears.

Over and above the land revenue and its appanage of *Rasum*, the villager was subjected to other taxes. Silk, saffron, violets, various kinds of forest products, hemp, tobacco, water-nuts and paper formed

1 "In nearly every village there are huge arrears of revenue, the greater part of which was absolutely fictitious. The famine of 1877-79 naturally caused heavy arrears which could not and ought not to have been realised. Then came the auction sales of 1882, by which the revenue was run up by men who were mere speculators, and had no intention of paying the amounts which they had bid for the farm of the villages. The increase offered by these farmers, but never paid by them, was considered as part of the revenue demand, and has been solemnly entered year by year as an arrear against the villages."—Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 408.



the State monopoly. "The right to legalize marriages was farmed out and it is said that the office of grave-digger was also taxed. Without going into details it may be said that nearly everything save air and water was brought under taxation."<sup>1</sup>

#### FEATURES OF LAWRENCE'S SETTLEMENT

It is not, therefore, surprising that "in 1889, the Kashmir State was bankrupt. The rich land was left uncultivated, and the army was employed in forcing the villagers to plough and sow, and worse still the soldiers came at harvest time ; and when the share of the State had been seized and these men of war had helped themselves, there was very little grain to tide the unfortunate peasants over the cruel winter, when the snow lies deep and temperature falls below zero."<sup>2</sup>

So when in 1889, Sir Walter Lawrence was entrusted with the settlement of the Valley, he found the work not only enormous, but a powerful opposition of the privileged official class and lazy city people ready to sabotage his efforts. The work of settlement had in fact been taken in hand two years earlier by Mr. A. Wingate, but he had to give it up in the face of bitter opposition and intrigue. Sir Walter, however, persisted and completed the work in the Valley by 1893. By the year 1912 practically every *Tehsil* and district in the State was either settled for the first time or in revision.

The main features of the settlement, as finally effected by Lawrence, were :

- (i) The State demand was fixed for fourteen years ;
- (ii) Payment in cash was substituted for payment in kind ;
- (iii) The use of force in the collection of revenue was done away with ;
- (iv) *Begar* or forced labour in its more objectionable form was abolished ;
- (v) Occupancy rights were conferred on cultivators in undisputed lands ;
- (vi) The area of privileged holders of land in excess of sanctioned area was assessed at ordinary rates ;
- (vii) Waste-lands were entered as *Khalsa*, but preferential rights for acquisition of such lands by tenants was granted ;
- (viii) Permanent but non-alienable hereditary rights were granted to those who accepted the first assessment.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p 417.

<sup>2</sup> Lawrence, *The India We Served*. p. 128, 134.

- (ix) All land was carefully evaluated on the basis of produce, previous collection and possibility of irrigation ; and
- (x) The *Rasum* and other exactions were abolished and the rents and liabilities of cultivators were defined.

At the conclusion of Lawrence's beneficial and memorable work, the Maharaja, against the wishes of his courtiers, wrote off arrears of land revenue amounting to thirty-one lakhs of rupees.

#### ABOLITION OF BEGAR OR FORCED LABOUR

The remission of arrears and the abolition of objectionable forms of *Begar* or forced labour, freed the peasantry from a haunting fear which had fallen to its lot for generations.

The genesis of the pernicious system of *Begar* has already been mentioned. Surrounded by high mountain barriers and having no roads fit for wheeled carriages, there developed the system of carriage of goods on human back over the high passes or in the Valley. By and by the administration assumed the powers of levying corvee in various ways. *Begar* came to mean to the Kashmiri far more than the mere impressment of labour, for under its comprehensive name was included every kind of demand for labour or property taken but not paid for by the officers. The custom became widespread during the Afghan and Sikh times and continued in an unabated form till Maharaja Gulab Singh's time. The feeble attempts made by the latter towards mitigating some of its rigorous practices, however, did not improve matters.

The famine of 1877-79 denuded the villages of most of their inhabitants and consequently there was a great pressure on the slender labour resources of the Valley. The building of the Gilgit road and provision of supplies to its garrison, demanded a large number of labourers who could only be recruited to this work by force. The proper cultivation of the soil, and of their chief staple, rice, are of so exacting a nature that great damage can be caused if the cultivators are kept away too long from the villages. But in spite of it, the incidence of *Begar* fell with severity on them, for most of the inhabitants of the city had secured exemption on one pretext or the other. "Gilgit", writes Lawrence, "is to the Kashmiri a constant terror, and when it was rumoured that transport was wanted to convey the baggage of the troops going to or coming from Gilgit there was a general stampede among the villagers. I have seen whole villages bivouacking on the mountains when the agents for the collection of transport arrived in their *Tehsil*, and I have seen inhuman punishment dealt out to men who demurred to leaving their homes for two or three months with the prospect of death from cold or starvation. I have seen villagers maimed from frostbite or shrivelled or

paralyzed from exposure to cold, and it is no marvel that the Kashmiris should loathe the very name of Gilgit."<sup>1</sup> With the increasing number of European visitors to Kashmir, the requisitioning of labour at nominal wages became extensive.

The State Government at the persistent request of the Resident finally decided in 1891 to abolish *Begar*. But at the same time it was felt that the transport arrangements of the Valley would collapse. *Begar* had prevented any labour class to grow and it would take at least a few years for it to come into existence. To tide over the period of transition, a scheme was formulated to do away with the most objectionable features of *Begar* at once, and at the same time prevent a collapse of the transport system.

The author of this scheme was Sir Walter Lawrence. Requisition of forced labour for government officials was abolished forthwith, and on the completion of the Gilgit road, carriage of goods to Gilgit by forced and unpaid labour was also done away with. The State Council framed elaborate rules for controlling the labour required for carriage of essential commodities in the State by labourers. In a resolution passed on 18th April, 1891, it was laid down that an additional cess at one anna in Jammu and half an anna in Kashmir for every rupee of land revenue paid by cultivators be levied to meet the cost of a Transport Department and a force of 1,000 labourers and 200 pack ponies to be permanently employed. A labourer was to be paid Rs. 5/- per month.<sup>2</sup>

The working of the new scheme was reviewed in 1906 and it was further modified in that the rate of wages was increased to Rs. 8/- per month and as by that time voluntary labour was forthcoming, the use of force in recruiting it was given up.<sup>3</sup> It was only in 1920 that *Begar* was abolished completely.

#### DEVELOPMENT OF ROAD COMMUNICATIONS

The need for enforcing *Begar* for carriage purposes abated considerably with another revolutionary undertaking, namely the building of a first-rate cart road down the Jhelum Valley linking Srinagar with Rawalpindi, the nearest rail-head, 200 miles away. Previous to this, as Sir Walter Lawrence writing in 1890 tells, there was an absence of roads fit for wheeled traffic in the Valley. Except low trollies resting on wheels, roughly fashioned from the round trunk of

1 Lawrence, *Valley*, p. 413.

2 Kashmir Government Records, File No. 34 of 1891.

3 *Ibid.*, File No. 77-P/100 of 1906.



trees and used for carrying crops, there was no other kind of wheeled carriage in Kashmir.

By the end of the 19th century, Kashmir had acquired an importance in the context of the Anglo-Russian strategy in Asia. The British were menaced by Russian advance in Central Asia, "and it was necessary," observes Biscoe, "that we should have a road for our troops in order to resist, if necessary, any attack from that quarter."<sup>1</sup> The British Indian Government controlled the administration of the State through their Resident. It was then that the project of linking up the Valley by a cart road with the rail-head at Rawalpindi—an important cantonment—was carried through.

The great work, commenced in 1880, was completed in September, 1890, when Maharaja Pratap Singh was driven through from Baramula to Kohala on the borders of his State. The Resident entrusted the work to a British-owned firm of contractors, Spedding, Mitchel and Co., who bringing in European engineers and several hundreds of Pathans and other labourers, completed the difficult job in record time. The distance from Rawalpindi to Srinagar took only four days to cover in a tonga; and heavy goods, carried on bullock-carts, reached Srinagar in twenty days.

The traditional route over the Banihal Pass through whose defiles kings and armies had crept during the Mughal and Sikh times, naturally fell into disuse and neglect. This had an adverse effect on the trade between the two major regions of the State—Jammu and the Valley. It was in 1912 when powers had been partly restored to the Maharaja that one of his far-sighted ministers, Dr. A. Mitra, worked out a plan to construct a cart road over the Banihal. Work was begun in 1913 and the first vehicle, a horse-drawn carriage, crossed over in 1915. Srinagar was thus directly linked with Jammu, 200 miles away. The railway line had already been extended from Sialkot to Jammu in 1890.

The Banihal Cart-Road as it was then called remained a private road of the Maharaja and a special permit was required to travel over it. In July, 1922, however, the Maharaja issued an order throwing open the road to the public. Both these roads were great feats of engineering skill and together they made 400 miles of hill road—the longest in the world.

#### TOURIST TRAFFIC

Along with the building of the Jhelum Valley and Banihal roads, many former bridle-paths in the Valley were converted into roads for

<sup>1</sup> *Kashmir in Sunlight and Shade*, p. 30.

cart traffic. Telegraph lines, originally laid during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign, were extended to all the important towns in the Valley and to Gilgit and Ladakh. Telephone connection between Jammu and Srinagar was also set up.

The opening up of the Valley had naturally far reaching political and economic effect on the life and culture of its inhabitants. So far living in seclusion, they now came in close and direct contact with the people living in the rest of India.

A conspicuous result was the increasing influx of European and Indian tourists to the Valley. The fame of Kashmir's scenic beauty and salubrious climate had already travelled to distant corners of the world, and the prophecy of G.T. Vigne, who visited the Valley in 1835, "that Kashmir will become the *sine qua non* of the Oriental traveller" was nearly coming true. Efforts were made both by the Imperial Government in Calcutta and political parties in England to bring pressure on the Maharaja to allow Europeans to acquire and own land in Kashmir with a view to turning it into a colony for British retired officers to settle in. But the Maharaja, backed by the leading nobles of the Valley, stubbornly opposed the move.

#### THE HOUSEBOAT

To this ban may be attributed the development of the houseboat which has become an unique institution in Kashmir. Due to lack of suitable accommodation, the visitors, whose number was increasing year after year, were put to great inconvenience and as the Maharaja's Government would not allow them to own or build houses in Kashmir the *doonga*, an indigenous boat was by and by transformed into a modern houseboat.

The credit for building the first houseboat strangely enough goes to a member of the Kashmiri Pandits, a community which had from ancient times nothing to do with the profession of boat building or boatmen. Pandit Naraindas came of a respectable family and was one of the first five Kashmiris to learn English from Rev. Doxey, the founder of the famous Kashmir Mission School in 1881. Declining to enter the traditional profession of quill-driving, he after leaving the school, set up a small store to cater to the needs of the European visitors. But unfortunately his shop was burnt down and finding it difficult to obtain a suitable shop he removed whatever he could save from the fire into a *doonga*. To his agreeable surprise he found that a *doonga* served as a better shop since it could be moored at a convenient and central place to the visitors. But rain and snow played havoc with his stores and he got an idea of having planks and shingle to replace the matting walls and roof of the *doonga*. When the first boat was ready

and afloat, an officer took a fancy to it and purchased it at a handsome profit. Pandit Naraindas found that boat building was a better business proposition than running a European store and soon he became the premier boat-builder of Kashmir, his yard turning out many a famous and well-built boat. His idea was later on improved upon by Colonel R. Sartorius, V.C., Sir R. Harvey, Bart., and Mr. Martyn Kennard. The latter built the famous two-storied houseboat, "Victory", in 1918 which was till recently standing majestically on the river at Raj Bagh. Most of the well-built and luxuriously furnished houseboats were built and owned by Europeans. The Indian visitor accustomed to living on land and away from waterways is rather out of element when he and his family have to spend a summer holiday in a houseboat.

Most of these houseboats are from 65 to 95 feet in length and about 14 feet in width. They are partitioned into a sitting, a dining and two or three bedrooms and a pantry with the required number of bathrooms and lavatories. They are equipped with modern furniture and many have sanitary fittings as well. The ventilation and lighting is ample, thanks to large glazed windows and doors. The ceilings are invariably of the Kashmiri *Khatamband* type, made of tiny, thin, carved pieces of wood arranged in beautiful geometrical patterns. The walls and partitions are built of grooved and framed panels fixed to the posts running from the bottom to the roof. The roof is covered by corrugated iron sheets over which a flat deck is made of wooden planks and carved railings. This deck is accessible by a staircase running up from the pantry. The boats are built of deodar wood and are rarely painted, the natural colour and grain and the sweet fragrance of the wood lending a charm of its own to the houseboat.

#### MEDICAL RELIEF

The development of rapid and easy means of communication no doubt bestowed manifold blessings on the people of the Valley, but there came also its concomitant evils. The two roads with a growing traffic resulted in an increased import of diseases, particularly cholera, for cholera like trade, travels by road. Epidemics became more frequent and combined with the insanitary and squalid conditions which prevailed in the city and towns, took a heavy toll of life. Due to insufficient diet and suppression of human liberty under the Afghans, the Sikhs and early Dogra rulers, the vitality of the people had been sapped and they fell an easy prey to cholera and other diseases. The worst epidemic was in 1892 when over ten thousand people died of it in the Valley. Writes Lawrence : "I was in camp during the epidemic, and moved through some of the most infected centres, and I believe that owing to



the panic which set in, the registration in the districts was not so careful as it may have been in the city, and that 5,931 deaths does not represent nearly the total mortality from cholera in the villages. Terrible gaps have been left in many families and villages which I know." Epidemics of cholera occurred later in 1896, 1902, 1906-07 and 1910 and an outbreak of plague in 1903-04.

Vigorous measures were taken to prevent the recurrence of epidemics by sanitating Srinagar and making available to the citizens clean and wholesome pipe-water. Roads and streets in the city were widened and paved, latrines built and arrangements for scavenging made. Vaccination against small-pox was first introduced in 1894.

As mentioned earlier, the Church Missionary Society of England set up a Medical Mission in Kashmir during Maharaja Ranbir Singh's reign. With their selfless zeal, the two Neve brothers (Drs. Ernest and Arthur Neve) rendered medical aid to suffering humanity in Kashmir. Later the State government under the advice of the Resident opened a well-equipped hospital in Srinagar with Dr. A. Mitra as its first Chief Medical Officer. Dr. Mitra with his untiring efforts was also responsible for establishing a municipality in Srinagar and opening a number of hospitals and dispensaries all over the State. A women's hospital was opened in Srinagar and another in Jammu. With the growth of education among the people and the extension of medical facilities, the incidence of epidemics was considerably reduced.

#### FLOOD PROTECTION MEASURES

The people whose material resources were on the increase with the dawn of the twentieth century had, however, to contend with another natural calamity which periodically visited the Valley. It has already been mentioned that the formation of the Valley makes it liable to heavy floods. During the Dogra rule there occurred several serious floods particularly in 1893 and 1903. The latter resulted from a heavy rainfall which continued for 48 hours in the month of July bringing down enormous quantities of melted snow from the surrounding mountains and in its wake causing destruction to life and property.

The expansion of Srinagar had started with the beginning of the present century in a haphazard way. The low-lying land towards the south had developed into Civil Lines where there were European shops and hutments. The flood of 1903 swept away this locality and the Resident, Sir Luis Dane, decided to undertake flood protection measures on a long term basis. The State Engineer, Mr. Field, in collaboration with the Electrical Engineer, Major A. de Lotbiniere were detailed to prepare

a comprehensive scheme in this respect. After a survey of several months they submitted their note and chief recommendations.

These engineers seemed to have followed strictly the measures taken by Suyya 1200 years ago. They recommended that to give a quicker and a wider outlet to the flood waters of the Valley, the bed of the river from the Wular lake to Baramula be deepened and widened. This was to be done by dredgers to be run by electric power which the engineers proposed to generate at Mahora sixteen miles lower down. It is interesting to know that originally this power house which later on supplied electricity to the city was meant exclusively for dredging operations.

Another important recommendation of the engineers was to dig a spill channel from above Srinagar to a point 15 miles below it towards its west. This they thought would carry a large amount of flood waters and would definitely help in saving the city from destruction.

In 1905-06 the machinery required for the hydro-electric generating plant at Mahora and the dredgers for deepening of the bed of the river at Baramula were ordered from America. The Mahora power house was completed by the end of 1907. Incidentally it may be mentioned here that it was the second hydro-electric project then in India, the first one being in Mysore.<sup>1</sup>

Dredging operations began in 1908 and by 1912 an area of 6,100 acres was reclaimed from around the Wular lake. It was allotted to cultivators for paddy cultivation.

Fortunately for the Valley there were no major floods for a quarter of a century. The dredging operations, though valuable in their own way, were looked upon by the State as useless expenditure and in 1917 the dredgers were sold as junk. The result was that the old story of silting up of the river bed in the Wular lake was repeated and when in 1928 there was a flood towards the end of August, the low lying parts of the city of Srinagar which had by then extended to a larger area were inundated and destruction was caused to the standing crops. Again the State government woke up to taking flood protection measures, but instead of having a long-term view of the problem, they started again to build high bunds round the low lying parts of Srinagar—the chief aim being to save the city at the cost of the rest of the Valley.

#### FOOD CONTROL SCHEME

With the return of stability in land tenures, the development of

<sup>1</sup> See Kashmir Govt. Records., File Nos. 128/B-14, and 237 of 1906, and 163/B-74 of 1912.

communications, adoption of flood protection measures and prevention of epidemics, there was a rapid increase in population by 1911. But in a place so predominantly agricultural and with such limited scope for increase in cultivable area and equally restricted sphere of expansion of agriculture, the need for industrialization to relieve the pressure on land was becoming imperative. True, the Kashmir government built a number of canals and repaired several which had fallen into disuse, but the increase in agricultural production was not commensurate with the increase in population. The result was an acute shortage of food-stuffs towards 1918. The State government, after long deliberations and trial of several schemes, finally adopted the old system of collecting a part of land revenue in kind and distributing it to the city population at a cheap rate. Thus came into being the Food Control Department which has ever since handled the collection and distribution of food grains in the Valley.<sup>1</sup>

The scheme had two objects in view. While on the one hand, it sought to come to the rescue of the poor peasant by advancing him cash for payment of land revenue, on the other hand it sold the paddy recovered from the peasant during the harvesting season to the citizens of Srinagar at a nominal profit. An efficient card system was devised for distribution of paddy to the citizens at the rate of 42 lbs. per head per month. Well designed granaries were erected at Srinagar for storing a year's supply of grain. This system worked admirably well and stood the stress of rising prices even during the second world war.

But even with this satisfactory control over the distribution of foodstuffs in the Valley the standard of life of the people was extremely low. A very large number of peasants moved in winter to the Punjab to work as labourers at miserably low wages and suffered humiliation and hardship. Many of them died every year at places far off from their homes. Kashmiri was the synonym for poverty and want.

#### SERICULTURE AND OTHER INDUSTRIES

With the development of popular tourism, there came some relief as there was an increased demand for greater production of artistic articles for which Kashmir was famous from ancient times. Tourism benefited boatmen, traders, and servants who worked each summer for the tourist trade.

Sericulture too gave employment to a large number of workers in Srinagar, and to numerous peasants who reared the silk worms in their homes during their spare time. The ancient industry was dead

<sup>1</sup> See Kashmir Govt. Records, File No. 245/Sh.-184 of 1921



during the Afghan rule and continued to be so under the Sikhs. Maharaja Ranbir Singh attempted to revive it. But it was only after the accession of Maharaja Pratap Singh to the *gaddi* that serious efforts were made to set up the industry and run it on a commercial scale and in a scientific and extensive manner. Seed was imported from Italy and France and distributed among the peasants for rearing cocoons. A factory with large filatures containing over 300 basins for reeling cocoons was set up in Srinagar in 1907 and by 1921 the factory was having five filatures with over 1500 reeling and 760 cooking basins. Over fifty thousand rearers of silk worms in the villages and 5,000 labourers in the factory at Srinagar produced over one lakh kilograms of raw silk annually.

The supreme control of the State's administration by the Government of India encouraged several European businessmen and entrepreneurs to try to secure land and other concessions in the Valley for the exploration of its mineral wealth. Vigne had written nearly a century earlier that "the tools of a Cornish miner may bring to light the hidden treasures of its iron, lead, copper and silver ores."

In 1901, one Major Anderson formed a firm called the Kashmir Mining Company and applied for and was given an exploring licence for the whole of the State. In 1906 he was given another licence under the new Mining Rules for prospecting in Reasi and Rajauri. In 1907 he secured a mining and prospecting licence for the sapphire mines of Padar in Bhadarwah *Tehsil*. He succeeded in extracting that year sapphires worth over 19,000 rupees. During the next two years he obtained sapphires to the gross value of Rs. 105,000 out of which he paid 30 per cent in royalty.

In 1908 a company named Kashmir Iron Mines and Power Syndicate, Ltd. was floated in London by the Earl of Errol, Viscount Church, Sir Robert Herman Hodge and others. Lord Errol and Major Hamilton visited Kashmir in 1907 and applied to the State government in the name of their company to grant them a ninety-nine years' lease of a large area in Jammu for the purpose of mining, laying a railway and installing a power station. The Maharaja who quickly realised the real motive of those gentlemen evaded the question of granting their request till the Mining Rules were framed and published although the Resident intervened several times. The promoters of the Company finding the rules very unfavourable to their projects, did not pursue the matter further.<sup>1</sup> The Kashmir government thereupon set up its own Department of Mining for surveying and prospecting of the

<sup>1</sup> See Kashmir Government Records, File Nos : 71-S/10 of 1906 ; 218-M/29 of 1906 ; 177-H/9 of 1906 ; and 177-M/9 of 1907.

mineral resources of the State.

#### IMPROVEMENT IN HORTICULTURE

But in the case of improving the indigenous fruits of Kashmir, and introducing the European varieties, credit goes entirely to French experts. The fact that there were possibilities of turning Kashmir into an orchard producing different kinds of delicate fruits and vegetables, was noted by all the European travellers from Bernier to Vigne. The story of modern horticulture in Kashmir is interesting.

From 1856 French firms in Paris began sending agents to the Valley for the purchase of shawls. One of these agents, M. Dauvergne, who was in Kashmir from 1865 to 1882 observing the grape vines growing wild in the Valley, conceived the idea of making wine for his own consumption. News of his experiment reached Maharaja Ranbir Singh who asked M. Dauvergne to continue the manufacturing process on behalf of the State government. The Frenchman explained that unless the quality of vines was improved and better varieties were imported from Europe and an expert in making wines and cognac called from France, the wine making industry could not be satisfactorily improved.

M. Ermens, formerly head gardener of public works in Paris, who was approached through the School of Horticulture at Versailles, came to Kashmir and made a thorough investigation of the soil, climate, rainfall and other conditions prevailing in the State. He submitted a report for importing various varieties of grape vines. Being a gardener by profession, M. Ermens brought with himself considerable number of fruit plants which he believed would thrive in Kashmir, together with implements for starting an experimental agricultural farm.

The vine cuttings and fruit trees were planted in Chashma Shahi in 1875 and four years later, when the grapes were plucked, M. Ermens experimented in making wine, but not being a distiller himself, his efforts did not meet with success. He recommended the securing of the services of two more experts—one to take charge of vineyards and the other to undertake the manufacturing process. These positions were filled by M. Bouley and M. Peychaud respectively.

These experts, however, thought that in the absence of a cart road linking the Valley with the rest of India, wine manufacturing industry could not be run profitably. They, however, realised the abundant scope for the production of high class fruit of European type. M. Bouley retired in 1887 and M. Peychaud continued the work alone. With the help of Sirdar Roop Singh, then Governor of the Valley, he collected during the winter months of 1886-87 about twenty-five thousand

wild fruit stocks, and this was the beginning of a nursery which has proved of incalculable benefit to the State. Grafted fruit plants were subsequently distributed to the State orchards. The State established a Department of Agriculture and Horticulture in 1907 and from 1908 a member from Kashmir sat on the Board of Agriculture of the Government of India.<sup>1</sup> The fruit industry has flourished since then and with the passage of time has acquired a leading position in the export trade of Kashmir.

#### THE STATE SUBJECT QUESTION

A stable government and the measures taken for promoting people's welfare, resulted in a phenomenal growth of population in the Valley. Whereas in 1891 when the first census was conducted in the State, the population of the Valley including Muzaffarabad was only 814,241, it rose to 1,407,086 in 1921. The progress in various fields was not, however, achieved without the indigenous inhabitants paying a heavy price in the loss of their liberty, and bearing of contumely and disrespect from the arrogant bands of officers and clerks imported wholesale from the Punjab to run the administration.

For, one of the first orders issued by the State Council on its constitution in 1889 was to change the court language from Persian to Urdu. This sudden and ruthless change took the old State officials by surprise, and being dubbed as incompetent and corrupt they were thrown out of job.<sup>1</sup> With three Members of the Council hailing from the Punjab, the administrative vacancies were quickly filled up with the Panjabis and this influx continued till 1925, when the Maharaja had, following relentless pressure from the inhabitants of the State, to stop it by decree.

Opposition to the sudden changeover from Persian to Urdu came almost immediately from the people.<sup>2</sup> But since the Resident was wielding unlimited powers, it was a cry in the wilderness. The poor Kashmiri, illiterate and leaderless, could not command a hearing. Patiently, however, he bore all the abuses that were heaped upon him. "I think that many of the hard things said about the Kashmiris," wrote Sir Walter Lawrence, "are due to the fact that the official interpreters of their character have been foreigners, often grasping and corrupt, always unsympathetic. Mughal Subhedars and Pathan Sirdars

1 Kashmir Government Records, File No : 33 of 1907.

2 Rules were framed to hold competitive examinations for appointment to State service. The rules were very stiff since no Kashmiri was even a matriculate then. Thus Panjabis were imported in large numbers. Kashmir Government Records, File No. 24 of 1891.



dismissed all difficulties of administration and all humane suggestions emanating from their masters with the remark that the Kashmiris were dishonest, treacherous and *Zulum parast*."

#### GROWTH OF EDUCATION

With the passage of time and increase in the number of young men educated in the schools teaching English, there grew an acute bitterness between the inhabitants of the State and the Punjabi officials who had occupied every position of vantage in the administrative set up.

The education of the pattern imparted by schools and colleges in the rest of the country began late in the State. The Mission School, the first to follow the University syllabus, was originally established by the Rev. J. S. Doxey in 1881, with only five boys on its roll. The good missionary content at having made a beginning and confident of its expansion persevered in his labours for two years after which he was succeeded by the Rev. J. Hinton Knowles who worked hard, and with his untiring zeal and tact the school made rapid progress. In 1892 when he handed over the charge to Rev. C. Tyndale Biscoe, the number on the roll was over 500. The school made sustained progress under Rev. Biscoe and produced boys not only educated in English and other subjects, but moulded in the best traditions of an English Public School.

The State School, a sister institution, run by the State government was established originally by Maharaja Ranbir Singh in 1874, but it was a school in which education was imparted in Sanskrit and Persian. In 1886 Dr. A. Mitra raised the status of this institution to a regular school introducing English teaching and imparting education according to the University curriculum. Both the schools turned out a large number of matriculates every year who clamoured for government jobs, to be given to them in preference to the Punjabis. The persistent representation of the people, backed by the Maharaja, to the Government of India, resulted in instructions being issued to the State to give preference to the *Mulkis* over the outsiders in the matter of employment. But the instructions were vague and very soon all those whose relations were in government service declared themselves to be *Mulkis*. The struggle continued and in 1912 a definition of 'State subject' was formulated for the first time. A State subject was one who had obtained an *Ijazatnama* or permission from the Maharaja's government to own land. But anybody could secure this permission without any effort, and the influx of outsiders continued unabated.

But the Kashmiris had by then made further advance in education. Early in 1905 a college was established at Srinagar through the efforts

of Mrs. Annie Besant and another at Jammu in 1908. Many young men passed through their portals having drunk deep at the fountain of Western political thought. The agitation over Curzon's Partition of Bengal, the movements for political freedom in Turkey, Ireland and Egypt, the growing strength of the Indian National Congress, filled these young men with ideas of freedom and equality and several of them, notably Pandit Shankar Lal Kaul, carried on a relentless agitation in the Indian Press for Kashmiris to be exclusively employed to man the administration of the State. Ultimately, the State government yielded to the pressure of public opinion and accepted the principle of recruiting only State subjects to government posts.

This agitation was mainly carried on by the Kashmiri Pandits who had originally suffered from the changeover from Persian to Urdu and whose main occupation was government service. It was this community particularly which took to the new educational courses and very soon came up to the standard required for recruitment to the various categories of government service. But the Muslim community still remained backward and the State did not take any active steps to encourage them to learn even the three R's. Nor did the British who ruled the State through the Resident make any effort to push forward the Muslims on the path of literacy and education. Opposition to modern education also came from Muslim religious leaders who wielded enormous influence among the masses.

#### THE FIRST SIGNS OF POLITICAL UNREST

Meanwhile several influential Kashmiri Muslims settled in the rest of India, raised their voice against the policy of inaction followed by the State government with regard to educating the Muslims of the State. Finally in 1916, the Educational Commissioner with the Government of India, Mr. Sharp, was requested by the State government to make recommendations in the light of the conditions prevailing in the State. Mr. Sharp submitted his report after a thorough study of the problem, but though the Maharaja accepted his recommendations, his officials did not implement them in the spirit in which they were made.<sup>1</sup>

The Muslims were thus a frustrated community and in 1924 when the Viceroy, Lord Reading, visited the State, some of the leading members of the community submitted a memorial to him demanding the

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1 The All-India Muslim Kashmiri Conference asked permission to wait upon the Maharaja in this connection. The permission was refused. Kashmir Government Records, File No. 2/Mis.-14, 1920.

grant of proprietary rights in land to the peasants,<sup>2</sup> a larger representation of Muslims in government service, improvement in the condition of Muhammadan education in the State ; abolition of *Begar* in all its aspects ; and the restoration of mosques in possession of the government. The Maharaja to whom full powers had been restored two years earlier was greatly incensed at the submission of the memorial to the Viceroy. This was ascribed to the general swing all over India towards communal politics engineered by the British. There were moreover some demonstrations in the State-owned silk factory in Srinagar and also pseudo political disturbances in the city. But these were in an elementary stage and the Maharaja's government put them down with a firm hand. Some of the signatories to the memorial were externed and their property confiscated. While the discontent was seething and there was an ominous calm indicating the coming of a storm, Maharaja Pratap Singh breathed his last in September, 1925. Having no male heir of his own, he was succeeded by his nephew, Maharaja Hari Singh.

Intensely devoted to his religion, Maharaja Pratap Singh was a benevolent ruler. The secret of his popularity was accessibility to his presence by the humblest of his subjects. Possessing a remarkable memory, he followed the grievances of a petitioner and reprimanded the officer who neglected to redress them. He was genuinely anxious to see his people prosper, but at the same time he was jealous of permitting them to form political or even religious societies or establishing a press. Addicted to opium, he was often made by his favourites and hangers-on to issue orders for which he later repented, and which he tried to rectify or cancel.

Scarcely a day passed without some striking act on his part of generosity, benevolence and practical sympathy for those who were in trouble, and for righteous indignation for anything that was mean, cruel or oppressive. And it may rightly be said that the long spell of peace and security that the people enjoyed during his reign was responsible for a growing consciousness of their rights and privileges and served as a stage to launch their successful struggle for the achievement of a democratic government in Free India.

2 In a letter dated 13th December, 1918, to his Chief Minister, the Maharaja wrote.

"As you are already aware the proprietary rights in all the lands of Kashmir belong to the ruling Chief exclusively, for the simple reason that the territories of Kashmir were purchased by my late lamented grand-father, Maharaja Gulab Singhji, and hence any sale of such land by anyone else is illegal".—Kashmir Govt Records, File No : 191/H-75, Bloc C of 1906.



## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### STRUGGLE FOR FREEDOM

MAHARAJA HARI SINGH ascended the *gaddi* with a large fund of his subjects' good will to his credit. Born in 1895, he inherited a fine physique, good looks, intelligence and riches from his father, Raja Amar Singh. After the latter's death in 1909 the British Indian Government took a keen interest in the education and upbringing of the prince. Major H. K. Barr was appointed his guardian and he continued in the appointment till 1918 when the prince attained his majority. Even during the time when Major Barr went on leave, the guardianship was entrusted to another British officer, Captain Burge.<sup>1</sup> His education was supervised by English teachers in the Mayo Collège, Ajmer, which he entered in 1908. After completing the full course of studies there, he received training in the Imperial Cadet Corps, Dehra Dun. In 1915 Maharaja Pratap Singh appointed him as the commander-in-chief of the State forces.

During the first world war, Raja Hari Singh was responsible for the training and equipment of the units of the State army which were sent to the Front. These units won laurels in several battles in France, Palestine and East Africa. He made a personal donation of Rs. 43 lakhs to the War Fund. But all these services to the British did not save him from becoming "the victim of an unscrupulous attempt at blackmail in the big way, and for a few days in 1921 the case of 'Mr. A' was to monopolise the headlines of certain British newspapers."<sup>2</sup>

In 1922 when on the restoration of full powers to Maharaja Pratap Singh, a State Council was again formed to assist the Maharaja in the conduct of administration, Raja Hari Singh was appointed its Senior Member. In this capacity he came in contact with the people and made an attempt to understand their problems and difficulties. He won their confidence by his zealous efforts to solve the food problem when there prevailed scarcity conditions in 1921-22. It was due to his intelligent handling of the situation that averted a severe famine in the Valley. He favoured the appointment of State subjects to all posts in the administra-

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1 Kashmir Govt. Records. File No. 218, Bloe C of 1909.

2 Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, p. 31.

tion. He was not dominated by members of any religious faction and placed his trust equally in his Hindu and Muslim officials.

#### POPULARITY OF THE NEW MAHARAJA

No wonder the educated classes in the State placed great hopes in the young Maharaja. Though the disproportionate expenditure of the State funds on the occasion of his *Rajtilak* ceremony, celebrated in Jammu in March, 1926, gave rise to misgivings, these were quickly removed by the new Maharaja's promulgation of the Agriculturists' Relief Regulation, which released the cultivator from the clutches of the usurious money-lender, the Compulsory Education Act which made primary education compulsory for boys in the cities of Jammu and Srinagar, the Prevention of Infants Marriage Act, which made it penal for parents to marry boys and girls before attaining the age of 18 and 14 respectively, by the definition of the "State subjects", and their exclusive appointment to government jobs. He announced that as Maharaja his religion was "justice", and attended the Id prayers of the Muslims in Srinagar.

#### SEETHING DISCONTENT

But the popularity of the Maharaja was short-lived. Very soon he came under the influence of advisers and court favourites who were neither intelligent nor had the good of the State and its people at heart. Unlike his predecessors, Maharaja Hari Singh lived in, so to say, an ivory tower surrounded by his few mean favourites having no personal contact with the people, who through centuries of suppression and misrule were groaning under the burden of heavy taxation, poverty and want. The proud Maharaja, ignorant of the forces that were rising at his feet, indulged in cheap pleasures of life and spent most of his time outside the State. The apparent calm and docility of the people lulled him to a false sense of security.

But all was not quiet in the State or in the rest of the country. The educated classes in Kashmir were becoming restless particularly due to growing unemployment among them. And when they witnessed the appointment of Dogra Rajputs of mediocre abilities to high government posts, their frustration turned to anger. The Muslims who formed the majority in the State, took to education late, and the few young men who passed the various examinations of the Universities in India, faced a stiff competition from more highly qualified Hindu youth. As it was, the governmental machinery came to be manned entirely by people professing the Hindu religion.

The increase in population and the consequent pressure on land

made the lot of the peasant pitiable indeed. The onsetting of trade depression all over the world reduced the workmen and petty shopkeepers to low straits. The shawl embroiderers and the papier mache artists were thrown out of job. Distress and frustration were writ large on every face.

And the Maharaja's administration was still functioning in the old bureaucratic fashion. Disgusted at the unimaginative mind of the ruler and his advisers, Sir Albion Banerji who was Foreign and Political Minister of the State for two years, resigned the post. His observations regarding the political, social and economic conditions prevailing in the State made in a press interview, created an uproar in the country and produced a deep effect on the minds of the people of the State. He said :

"Jammu and Kashmir State is labouring under many disadvantages, with a large Muhammadan population absolutely illiterate, labouring under poverty and very low economic conditions of living in the villages and practically governed like dumb driven cattle. There is no touch between the Government and the people, no suitable opportunity for representing grievances and the administrative machinery itself requires overhauling from top to bottom to bring it up to the modern conditions of efficiency. It has at present little or no sympathy with the people's wants and grievances.

"There is hardly any public opinion in the State. As regards the Press it is practically non-existent with the result that the government is not benefited to the extent that it should be by the impact of healthy criticism."

#### BAN ON PRESS AND PLATFORM

For the conditions depicted by Sir Albion, Maharaja Hari Singh was not, however, entirely responsible. The policy of suppressing public opinion had been assiduously followed by his predecessors and wholeheartedly supported by the British Indian Government. Taking undue advantage of the isolation of the State and the backwardness of its people, the British Government, jealous of maintaining the safety of their frontiers, took active steps to prevent the infiltration into the State of "seditious" ideas from the rest of the country by preventing the formation of any association, political social or even religious, and publication of a newspaper in the State.

The attitude of the State government and the Resident to the printing of a paper in the State will be clear from the orders passed in 1906 on a harmless journal entitled *Ladakh Akhbar*. The journal



printed at Leh in the Bodhi language and script on a litho press and priced at one pice per copy was published as early as 1903. Edited by Rev. J.E. Peter of the Moravian Mission, the journal whose circulation was confined to 150 copies per issue was distributed in Ladakh, Lahoul, Bushair and as far away as Darjeeling. The journal gave bare news about the activities of the Mission and since no formal sanction for its publication was obtained, it escaped the notice of the Resident and the Darbar. Three years later the Resident came to know of a paper being printed in the State and brought it to the notice of the Maharaja with a strong note as to why the State government was permitting it to be issued without the formal sanction.

The Maharaja ordered the Moravian Mission to stop its publication forthwith. He was against "allowing newspapers and journals being published in the State, unless the same is previously allowed and the conditions of its publication are clearly defined." In a further communication to his Chief Minister with regard to this he observed that "the reasons why publication of newspapers and journals has hitherto never been considered desirable to be allowed are better known to the Chief Minister than being described by me here."<sup>1</sup>

The policy applied to the publication of even cultural or religious magazines. The Judicial Minister while refusing permission to one Anant Ram to publish a magazine of this nature, remarked that in his opinion it was difficult "to disconnect politics from questions which have a bearing on the social, moral or educational condition of a community."<sup>2</sup>

So jealous were the authorities of allowing the growth of interest in newspapers and journals in the State that they would not tolerate the import of even harmless magazines of fiction like the *Strand Magazine*. In 1908, one Damodar Singh, who had studied for more than a year in America and was employed as an electrical engineer in the State, was suspected to be a 'seditionist' because it had come to the knowledge of the Maharaja that he was getting "newspapers that are considered seditious in India and takes interest in such papers." The accused pleaded in humble terms that he was a loyal subject of the British government and was subscribing to such harmless journals as the *Strand Magazine*, the *Modern Review*, and the *Metropolitan* only because he had acquired the reading habit in America.<sup>3</sup>

The ban on formation of societies, even social and religious, was extremely rigid. As late as 1921, the Maharaja very reluctantly gave

1 Kashmir Govt. Records.

2 *Ibid.*, File No. 30, Bloc C of 1906.

3 *Ibid.*, File No. : 71/N-361 of 1908.

permission to the formation of an association whose object was the teaching of the Quran, and ordered the police "to watch that the Anjuman does not take part in political matters."<sup>1</sup>

To further ensure that the people did not have any channel for expressing their grievances and that they had no contact with the rising political wave in the rest of India, the movements of all visitors of a suspicious nature were closely watched and on frivolous grounds they were turned out of the State. This became all the more pronounced during and after the agitation against Lord Curzon's Partition of Bengal in 1905. In 1909 the Resident informed the State government that two agitators from Punjab (Ajit Singh and Sufi Amba Prasad) were about to enter the State and a watch be kept over them. The Maharaja in his zeal replied that keeping of a watch was not necessary ; he would not allow them to enter the State.<sup>2</sup> Every Bengali was a suspect. A Bengali youth who came to Jammu in 1910 was closely watched and followed by the police although his relative, a professor in a State college gave an undertaking that he would be personally responsible for his actions. The student was forthwith turned out of the State and the Resident applauded the action.<sup>3</sup> Even a *sanyasi* of the Ramakrishna-Vivekananda Mission was ordered out of the State as the Resident and the State authorities thought he looked 'suspicious'.<sup>4</sup>

#### EARLIER POLITICAL DEMONSTRATIONS

But in spite of these precautions and virtual sealing up of the State borders against the infiltration of political ideas, there occurred now and then political demonstrations indicating that the awakening in the rest of the country was influencing the minds of the young men in the State too. Jammu, being adjacent to the Punjab, was naturally the first to be affected by this wave. In 1907 the students of the Government School collected subscriptions for the *Punjabee*, a paper of Lahore connected with the student movement. Some of the students shouted "Bande Mataram" in the streets and wrote the slogan on the walls of the school. This came to the knowledge of the Resident and the State authorities expelled four students from the school ; two teachers were dismissed from service. In his note of 12th May, 1907, Raja Amar Singh took a serious view of the incident. "A movement like this", he wrote, "which has the effect of inoculating the students' mind with

1 *Ibid*, File No. : 66/102-C, of 1921.

2 *Ibid.* File No. : 12/N-280 1909.

3 *Ibid*, File No. 202/N-5/C, of 1910.

4 *Ibid.*, File No. : 71 of 1909.

germs of mischievous political ideas should be immediately nipped in the bud." He gave instructions to the District Magistrates and the police "to keep close watch over all agitations and their promoters," and authorized them "to adopt measures consistent with the situation to prevent and put a stop to seditious and politically dangerous movements."<sup>1</sup>

But howsoever the authorities might try to keep the people under their heels, the urge for freedom which had seized the educated classes in the State manifested in one way or the other. The two colleges were turning out dozens of graduates and some of them though not taking to politics, openly carried on a campaign in the press outside the State. Several influential Kashmiris whose ancestors had left Kashmir and settled in the rest of India formed associations and issued journals and pamphlets demanding a better deal for the people of the State, particularly the Muslims. By 1919, thanks to the inspiration that the young men of the State got from the Congress movement in India, the middle class population in the State was thoroughly permeated with the ideas of freedom and self-rule.

#### INSPIRATION FROM GANDHIJI

The Non-Cooperation and Satyagraha movement launched by the Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi had its repercussions in the State too. In the Prince of Wales (now Gandhi Memorial) College in Jammu the students went on strike following the expulsion of a student from the college by the Principal, an Englishman. Subsequently over 150 students went to Gujranwala to attend a conference of students convened by Lala Lajpat Rai to induce the students to join the Non-Cooperation movement. It was, however, on the personal intervention of the Maharaja that the situation did not assume serious proportions as it had at one stage threatened to do.<sup>2</sup>

This incident made the State authorities more vigilant. They now began to turn out of the State all those who had any sympathy with the Non-Cooperation or Khilafat movements. A religious preacher from the Punjab who exhorted the audience to be truthful and wear *Khadi* was arrested and later on turned out of the State boundary.

In the Valley there was an apparent calm but occasionally there was a rumbling in the political horizon. Organised demonstrations took place during 1922-23, pressing the government to solve the food problem. And we have already noted the action of some Muslim religious leaders and landlords in presenting a memorial to the Viceroy for

1. *Ibid.*, File No. : 24 N-118, of 1907.

2. *Ibid.*, File No. 63/60-C of 1921.



the redress of the grievances of the Muslim subjects of His Highness the Maharaja.

So when Maharaja Hari Singh ascended the *gaddi* the people of the State had already a background of political agitation and its suppression by the State government. There was now a regular inflow of daily papers in English and vernaculars from the rest of India, and the events there were keenly watched by the people of the State. The Congress movement and the working of "dyarchy" in India were influencing the youth of the State. Most of the students after graduating from the State Colleges, joined various Universities in India for further studies. There they came in contact with student and other political leaders and on their return acted as a leavening among the masses. No wonder when Mahatma Gandhi launched his famous Salt Satyagraha in 1930, the authorities in the State were faced with a situation for which they were not prepared at all.

The news of Gandhiji's arrest spread like wild fire and there was a spontaneous hartal in Jammu, Srinagar and other towns. In Srinagar a huge procession was organised which passed through the main streets of the city. A bonfire of foreign cloth was held in the city's main chowk while the demonstrators shouted anti-British slogans. The authorities looked helplessly on, reflecting perhaps upon their long, sustained but futile efforts to muzzle the people's voice and to suppress popular discontent and urge for freedom.

Meanwhile, several Muslim young men, fresh from the Universities in India, particularly Aligarh, where they had come in contact with Muslim leaders and propagators of pan-Islamism, organised themselves into a group, holding frequent meetings at the Muslim Reading Room in Srinagar. Frustrated at their failure to enter State service direct on responsible and remunerative posts, they came to the conclusion that unless they had the backing of the masses, they had no future in the land of their birth. By and by they organised larger meetings and carried on a whispering but ineffective campaign against what they termed a Hindu State.

They had the tacit support of the British Indian Government as well as the British minister. The Maharaja, ignorant of the feelings and aspirations of the people, did not take any initiative in winning back their good will and confidence:

#### BRITISH SUPPORT THE COMMUNAL MOVEMENT

This was in fact tragic, because the Maharaja had progressive ideas about freedom and self-rule. He expressed these sentiments at

the Round Table Conference held in London at about this time. Speaking on behalf of the Princes, he observed : "As Indians and loyal to the land whence we derive our birth and infant nurture, we stand as solidly as the rest of our countrymen for our land's enjoyment of a position of honour and equality in the British Commonwealth of Nations." These and similar observations convinced the British that Maharaja Hari Singh was not a prince to toe their line. They had already had a bitter taste of his haughty and independent nature when on his accession to the *gaddi* he had withdrawn the many facilities and easements which the Resident used to enjoy at Srinagar.

But more serious than this was his attitude towards the frontier policy. It will be recalled that by the time Maharaja Pratap Singh was restored to full powers, the control of Gilgit had devolved upon the British Political Agent there, without of course the true consent of the Maharaja who was till then powerless. The area of the Gilgit Frontier was divided into two categories of administration—the Gilgit Wazarat or settled area, ruled directly by the Maharaja, and the Political Agency under the control of the Political Agent appointed by the British Indian Government. With the accession to the throne of Maharaja Hari Singh in 1925, the question of this anomalous position which had come into existence in Gilgit was raised with the Government of India. A long correspondence ensued, the Maharaja throughout pressing for the abolition of the Agency. Ultimately the Resident sent a Memo to the Darbar putting forth a new proposal by which "the appointment of Political Agent, Gilgit, should be abolished and in his place a Political Officer should be lent to the Kashmir State to hold the appointment of Governor of Gilgit and to conduct political relations on behalf of the Government of India and the Kashmir Government with the Political Districts. The Political Officer would be a lent State servant and not under the orders of the Government of India." But before this proposal could be given a practical shape, internal disorder broke out in the State enabling the Resident to withdraw it at the instance of the Government of India.

Gilgit had always been a tender spot for the British and any questioning of their right to hold it produced a violent reaction from their side.

For, at this time the British desired a fuller and unhindered control of this frontier. Soviet Russia had extended its hold on Tashkent, Khiva and Bokhara. The British intuitively felt that the Communist ideas were potentially much more of a menace to their domination of the Orient than all the Tsar's armies in the past. As early as 1919, the British Indian Government had directed the State

government to keep a careful watch for any Bolshevik literature which might find its way over the Central Asian road and be found in circulation in the State. They built airfields and wireless stations at Gilgit and many military missions were sent from there to Central Asia to help restore the overthrown Amirs, Beys and Khans to their seats of power and privilege.

Maharaja Hari Singh's demand to abolish the Agency and hand over to him its control was in fact puerile and he had to bear its consequences in full. He secured respite from trouble only when he gave up the demand for the restoration of Gilgit, and when in 1935 he himself withdrew his administrative machinery from there and handed over even the Gilgit Wazarat on a "60-year lease".

It is not, therefore, difficult to imagine that the British Indian Government, in order to further their interests in Gilgit and to bring the State under their effective control, gave active support to the organisers of mass meetings and encouraged the conduct of the movement on communal lines. The policy was already paying them a good dividend in the rest of India.

With the Muslim masses groaning under several disabilities and passing through a period of severe economic depression; with thousands of Hindu young men educated but unemployed; the administration under an inefficient and unsympathetic bureaucracy, and with the direct encouragement by the British to agitators, the stage was set for a convulsion early in 1931.

#### THE UPSURGE

An extensive and fierce propaganda campaign against the Maharaja's rule was let loose from Lahore and other cities of the Punjab by the Muslim press. Leaflets and journals containing stories of the deliberate suppression of Muslims in the State were distributed in thousands among the people, instigating them to rise against the Maharaja who, it was alleged, was dominated by his Hindu officers. The State government, according to the authors of the propaganda literature, was entirely Hindu and was determined to keep the Muslim majority in perpetual serfdom. The Anglo-Indian press joined the chorus of denunciation of the Maharaja and his government.

Jammu being nearer to the Punjab was the first to be affected by this propaganda. In December, 1930, the All Kashmir Muslim Conference, founded a few years earlier, held the annual session in Lahore which was attended by some young men from Jammu who, on their return to the State, embarked upon a campaign of agitation against



the government. This excited the Muslim residents of Jammu city and adjoining villages. A few unfortunate incidents pertaining to the reading of the *Khutba* by a Maulvi and the disrespect shown to the Holy Quran by a police constable were seized upon by the agitators and the cry "Islam in danger" was raised. In the Valley, the Muslims being staunch followers of the Mir Waiz Ahmad Ullah, the chief preacher of Srinagar refrained, in the absence of his directive, from actively responding to the call of the Muslim Conference of Lahore to rise against the Government. The young men who had organised the Reading Room Party and represented the progressive element among Muslims were up against the wall of Maulvi Ahmad Ullah's conservative outlook on politics.

But early in March, 1931, the old Mir Waiz died, his funeral being attended by the entire Muslim population of the city. The new Mir Waiz, Yusuf Shah, an enthusiastic young man, was in full sympathy with the aims and objects of the Reading Room Party, having himself, while a student of the Theological College at Deoband in Uttar Pradesh, witnessed the freedom struggle of the masses in the rest of India. There was thus no difficulty in calling mammoth public meetings in the various mosques of Srinagar and other mufasil towns, to be addressed by the young members of the Reading Room Party.

#### SHEIKH MOHAMMAD ABDULLAH

The most conspicuous and impressive among them was Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, fresh from the University with a Master of Science degree. Born in 1905, he was brought up by his widowed mother and elder brothers who were engaged in shawl trade. After passing his Intermediate examination from the Sri Pratap College in Srinagar he continued his studies in Lahore and took his degree from the Punjab University. In 1928 he secured admission to the Aligarh Muslim University and passed his M. Sc. examination in 1930. Returning to Kashmir he succeeded in getting a teacher's post in the Government High School, Srinagar. The Maharaja's government had instituted by then a Civil Service Recruitment Board for selecting candidates to higher posts on the basis of merit. Again, the Hindus who had by then advanced in education and secured technical qualifications, offered a stiff resistance to the entry of Muslims into State service, although the latter had the necessary qualifications to fit them for the job. Sheikh Abdullah raised his voice against this policy and resigned his job in protest.

As an active member of the Reading Room Party, Sheikh Abdullah was responsible for organising mammoth meetings of

Muslims in various mosques and delivering fiery speeches exposing the hardships and the depressed condition of the people. Communal tension reached the flash point and it needed only a spark to explode.

JULY 13, 1931

The spark was supplied by the arrest and trial in Srinagar of one Abdul Qadir who had come to Kashmir in the service of a European visitor as cook. On 21st of June, 1931, he made a speech at a meeting held in the precincts of the *Khanqah* of Shah Hamadan. The speech was considered by the government as seditious. He was arrested and his trial in the court of the Sessions Judge greatly excited the Muhammadan public and huge crowds assembled in and outside the court on the days of hearing. Consequently it was decided to hold the trial in the Srinagar Central Jail. While the court was in session, a crowd of four to five thousand people that had collected outside the jail raised slogans demanding the withdrawal of the case against Qadir, and made a rush at the gate of the jail. Their progress was halted by a posse of police. Angered at this the crowd pelted the police with stones. Meanwhile the prisoners in the jail became restive. Telephone wires were cut. The district magistrate thereupon ordered the armed police to open fire on the crowd. Twenty-one persons died and many more were wounded.

The officials became nervous and lost control over the situation. The crowd carried the dead bodies on *charpoys* and raising banners of blood paraded the main markets of the city. There was wide spread resentment among the Muhammadans at these killings and having been fed for months past with vicious communal propaganda, their wrath was turned against the Hindus whom they associated with the Maharaja's government. Shops belonging to the Hindus were looted and there was communal outburst in a suburb of Srinagar where three Hindus lost their life.

The Maharaja acted promptly. He sent a company of his body-guard cavalry to the scene of disturbance. The soldiers arrested hundreds of people and put them behind the bars. In the evening thousands collected in the Jamma Masjid in Srinagar where the dead bodies of the victims of police firing were lying preparatory to their burial next day.

Historically the 13th July, 1931 is a landmark in the annals of modern Kashmir. It was on that day that open demonstrations against the despotic rule of the Maharaja took place. True, there had been demonstrations in Kashmir earlier against the Maharajas particularly by the shawl weavers, and often by the peasants. But

never before had the entire Muslim population risen as one man against the authorities. It is from that date that the people took upon themselves the task of securing for themselves the right of democratic self-rule.

There was a sharp reaction to the communal aspect of the popular outburst from all shades of opinion among the Muslims after the first wave of anger had subsided. The traditional amity and good will between Hindus and Muslims which had been shaken by this outburst asserted immediately. Soon it was realised that the movement, if it was to succeed at all, needed to be guided into healthy secular channels.

The Maharaja appointed an official committee presided over by the chief justice of the State High Court to conduct an enquiry into the July 13th firings, but it was boycotted by the Muslims who questioned its independent nature.

#### THE BRITISH APPEAR ON THE SCENE

The demand for instituting an impartial commission of enquiry received support from the British. The Resident communicated personally to the Maharaja the following secret message from the Viceroy. "Extensive Muhammadan propaganda is being worked on the frontier, at Simla and in India generally. The Viceroy wonders whether it would not be wise for His Highness to ask for independent outside assistance for a Commission of Enquiry or at least for services of a Muhammadan High Court judge to add to the existing committee. The Viceroy fears that findings by the present committee if local Muhammadans refuse to serve on it, would do little to allay agitation."

In his long reply the Maharaja pleaded that it would detract from the prestige of the State High Court if the impression was allowed to grow that an outside Muslim judge would be appointed to the Commission of Enquiry. He assured the Viceroy that the situation would return to normal soon. On August 1, 1931, the Resident again conveyed to the Maharaja the demand of the Muslims "for an impartial British enquiry." On 2nd September, he asked the State to allow a deputation of Muslims from the Punjab to meet the Maharaja. The latter turned it down.

The Maharaja dismissed his British minister and appointed an experienced administrator in his place. The new Prime Minister, Raja Hari Kishen Kaul, realised that without entering into some understanding with the leaders of the agitation, it was not possible to restore normal conditions in the State. Accordingly he invited the representatives of



Muslims and a truce was concluded on 26th August according to which the leaders undertook to suspend the agitation and present their grievances to the government. The latter on its part undertook to release all political prisoners and withdraw cases against them.

But this was not to the liking of the members of the All-India Kashmir Committee, as the Kashmir Muslim Conference of Lahore came to be designated now. They apprehended the slipping out of their hands of the control over the agitation. Accordingly, they geared their propaganda machine to denouncing the truce. Sheikh Abdullah in his inexperience and youthful zeal launched another agitation in violation of the truce agreement and he was promptly arrested along with some of his colleagues.

There was an immediate outburst of popular anger against the administration. Numerous processions paraded the streets of Srinagar, but this time there were no communal incidents. The popular will to maintain communal peace prevailed, even though there were forces working for months to break it.

The Maharaja's government acted with such despatch that the public was taken by surprise. The rule of ordinances was inaugurated. The Notification 19-L, based on the notorious Burma Ordinance of the British Government, came into force. There were wholesale imprisonments, public floggings and shootings, at Anantnag, Shopyan, Baramula and Sopore.

The British Indian Government now appeared on the scene in a commanding role. Three days after the incidents, the Resident delivered a peremptory note to the Maharaja demanding its acceptance within twenty-four hours. The note mentioned that the Government of India "took a very serious view of the situation and feared widespread outbreaks in the Punjab. There were also apprehensions of Muslims from India sending *jathas* (bands of volunteers) to the State. The Government of India, therefore, suggest that the concessions of the following nature should be announced immediately :

- “(i) Definite and immediate steps should be taken to remedy the more obvious grievances of Muslim subjects such as cow killing ordinance, the prohibition of *Khutba*, the stoppage of *Azan*, etc.
- (ii) A completely unprejudiced British officer deputed by the Government of India should hold a full inquiry into Muhammadan grievances and demands. The Government of India attached the greatest importance to this and advised His Highness to ask for the loan of the services of

such officer without delay.

- (iii) A European Indian Civil Service officer, be appointed as the Chief Minister, and
- (iv) The sooner Sir Daya Kishen Kaul (the brother of Raja Hari Kishen Kaul) left the State the better as his presence was definitely against His Highness' interests "

The Maharaja had thus to yielded to the pressure from the people below and the Government of India from above. He announced the withdrawal of Ordinance 19-L, amnesty to all political prisoners and promised the institution of an impartial commission to examine the grievances of the people and making suitable recommendations.

The scene now shifted to the Jammu province where unrest was simmering for a considerable time. The Ahrar party of the Punjab which had sympathies with the nationalist movement of the Congress, finding that the Ahmadya party was gaining influence with the Muslim population of the State, organised several demonstrations to show their sympathies with their co-religionists living in the State. They started sending *jathas* (bands of volunteers) into the State territory. Simultaneously, there broke out communal rioting in Mirpur district where the Hindus in general and the money-lending class in particular became the victims of loot and arson. The Kashmir Government was unable to cope with the situation and they approached the Government of India with the request to send one company of British troops to Mirpur and two to Jammu district to restore law and order.

There was an immediate response from the Government of India. The troops entered the State on 3rd November and on the 7th the Government of India issued an ordinance prohibiting the sending of *jathas* into the State.

#### GLANCY COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Meanwhile the Maharaja had asked for the loan of the services of an officer to preside over a Commission to go into the grievances of the people and on 12th November he announced the appointment of the Commission under the chairmanship of Sir B.J. Glancy of the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India.

The Commission besides the President had four members, one Hindu and one Muslim from Jammu Province and one Hindu and one Muslim from the Kashmir Province. After a few months, the representative of the Jammu Hindus resigned but the Commission continued its work and submitted its report recommending that minimum qualifications for appointment to a Government post should not be pitched

unnecessarily high and effective measures should be taken "to prevent the due interests of any community from being neglected". The Commission also recommended the grant of proprietary rights in respect of all land "of which the ownership is retained by the State and the right of occupancy is enjoyed by private persons." It also recommended the abolition of several vexatious taxes and laid great emphasis on the removal of unemployment by promoting industries in the State.

While the Commission was conducting its inquiry, events in the State were moving fast. Roused from long political slumber, the people were clamouring for their basic rights. Each community was voicing its grievances, which to the surprise of all, were fundamentally the same. No wonder the people began seriously to think whether there should not be a united movement to have these basic disabilities removed. Sensing the desire of the masses, the leaders of the Muslims reorientated their approach to the problem.

This received further strength from the withdrawal of British support to the communal agitators, following the appointment of Lt. Col. E.J.D. Colvin of the Foreign and Political Department as the Prime Minister, and of three officers of the Indian Civil Service as the Home, Revenue and Police Ministers of the State. The control of administration thus quietly passed into the hands of the British Indian Government.

The communal discord which was contrary to the long traditions of Kashmir, but which had marked the first upsurge of political awakening in the beginning of 1931, subsided considerably by the middle of 1932. When, therefore, the Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference came into existence that year in October, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, its first president, actually voiced the sincere feelings of the masses when in his address he declared that "our country's progress is impossible so long as we do not establish amicable relations between the different communities." Though communal in name, the policy of the Conference from its very inception remained national in essence.

But communalism in politics did not vanish overnight. It lingered long enough to give birth to a party of communalists among the Muslims in Jammu and to a lesser extent in the Kashmir Valley. The Jammu leaders of Muslim agitation did not bring themselves round to accepting the nationlistic leanings of leaders from Kashmir, whereas in Kashmir itself the Mir Waiz and his followers openly severed their connection with Sheikh Abdullah and his colleagues. These defections were later to produce repercussions on the political situation in a wider field.



In March, 1933, the Muslim Conference launched a Civil Disobedience Movement demanding a constitutional government for the State. Again repression was resorted to by the government. Ultimately the Maharaja appointed a Constitutional Reforms Commission under the Presidentship of B. J. Glancy. The Commission recommended the setting up of a Legislative Assembly elected on a narrow and limited franchise and having only recommendatory powers.

#### PRAJA SABHA

The Assembly known as Praja Sabha consisted of 75 members, out of whom only 33 were to be elected by different communities on a franchise which did not cover more than 3 per cent of the population. Village and district headmen, priests and managers of religious property, title holders, pensioned officers, medical practitioners, lawyers and those who had passed the Middle-school examination or its equivalent could only vote. Women were not given the right to vote as, in the words of the Franchise Committee, "the inclusion of women votes would increase the administrative difficulties of the elections."

The Praja Sabha could ask questions, move resolutions, introduce Bills and discuss the State Budget. The Prime Minister who was appointed by the Maharaja was, however, empowered to return to the Praja Sabha for reconsideration any Bill passed by the Sabha together with any amendments which he might recommend. There was a further provision to deal with any case in which the Praja Sabha did not fall into line with the wishes of the government. Where the Praja Sabha refused leave to introduce or fail to pass in the form recommended by the Council of Ministers (appointed by the Maharaja) any Bill, His Highness could declare that the proposed legislation was essential for the good government of the State, and on such declaration, the Bill could become an Act.

Among matters excluded from the purview of the Praja Sabha, the important ones were His Highness' privy purse, organisation and control of the State Army and the provisions of the Constitution Act.

The Assembly, however, helped to educate the people in parliamentary practices. The debates, questions and answers, discussion on the budget, introduction and passage of official and non-official Bills, were keenly followed by the people.

In the first elections to the Legislature held in 1934, the Muslim Conference captured 19 out of 21 seats allotted to Muslims.

The Praja Sabha moreover provided a place for people representing different communities and interests in the State to sit together and helped

the leading political party, the Muslim Conference, to understand their difficulties and the disabilities that they laboured under. To a large extent this was responsible for a reorientation of the political and economic policies of the Conference. Need was felt for a broad-based party to fight for the fundamental rights of the people and a democratic government. Similar sentiments were expressed in the local papers started from 1932, when freedom of the press and platform was announced by the Maharaja at the recommendation of the Glancy Commission.

#### LEASE OF GILGIT TO THE BRITISH

In the meantime Col. Colvin and the Resident had succeeded in persuading the Maharaja to give the Gilgit Wazarat on "lease" for sixty years to the British Indian Government and hand over the administration and control of the leased territory to them. On March 29, 1935, the Maharaja and the Resident, Col. L. E. Lang, signed the "lease" document by which the Viceroy and Governor-General of India was authorised to assume the civil and military government of the Wazarat of Gilgit subject to the condition that the territory would continue to be included within the dominion of His Highness the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir and the rights pertaining to mining would also be reserved to the Kashmir government. There was no mention in the agreement of the districts under the Political Agency of Gilgit for the simple reason that their civil and military administration was already in the hands of the Viceroy and Governor-General of India.

Having attained their objective, the British at once relaxed the pressure on the Maharaja. He was given complete freedom to deal with the political agitators in any way he liked. The leaders of various communal and political parties in the State who had till then received support and inspiration from Col. Colvin's government were told to fend for themselves. They had already lost the support and good will of the Punjabi Muslims who had championed their cause in 1931. The All-India Kashmir Committee of Lahore and Simla which had drawn its inspiration from Anglo-Indian officers and press, and directed the Muslim agitation in the State during 1931, died its natural death in June, 1933. Sir Mohammad Iqbal resigned from the membership of the Committee on the ground that it was a coterie of Ahmediyas who were more interested in propagating their religious beliefs among the Muslims of Kashmir than fighting for their political rights. In July, the Committee was reconstituted and Sir Iqbal elected its President. But by that time the Kashmiri Muslims as well as Hindus had taken

the direction of the freedom movement into their own hands. Sir Iqbal's attempt to keep the communal agitation alive in the State thus proved a failure.

#### FIELD CLEAR FOR GROWTH OF NATIONAL MOVEMENT

The field for the development of a healthy nationalist movement was, therefore, clear. Early in 1936, Col. Colvin relinquished the post of Prime Minister and the Maharaja appointed Sir N. Gopalaswami Aiyangar in his place. The latter, a hardened bureaucrat, who had served the British Indian Government for the major part of his life, was at heart a nationalist and he saw to it that the formation of a truly nationalist party gained strength.

On 8th May, 1936, the Muslim Conference Party observed a Responsible Government Day throughout the State. An appeal had been made by its President, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, to the Hindus and Sikhs to participate in the functions held in this connection. The response was most encouraging and a number of meetings were addressed by Hindu, Sikh and Muslim leaders, exhorting the people to forge a common platform and party. In fact, the urge for the formation of a truly nationalist party came from the overwhelming enthusiasm the Responsible Government Day aroused among the people.

Another indication of the working of the mind of the people with regard to politics came in 1937 when for the first time a huge procession of labourers was taken out in Srinagar. Led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, an indefatigable worker of the Muslim Conference from its very inception, the processionists raised slogans against retrenchments and unemployment. In a mammoth meeting Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and Ghulam Mohammad Sadiq declared that the labour movement was above communalism and embraced all people. They stressed the need for all the communities forging a united front against despotism and vested interests. Several Hindu and Sikh speakers notably Prem Nath Bazaz also spoke in the same vein. The credit for fulfilling the strong wish of the people for having a united nationalist party goes to the leadership of the Muslim Conference. In his Presidential address to the sixth annual session of the Conference on 26th March, 1938, Sheikh Abdullah observed : "We must end communalism by ceasing to think in terms of Muslims and non-Muslims when discussing our political problems.....and we must open our doors to all such Hindus and Sikhs, who like ourselves believe in the freedom of their country from the shackles of an irresponsible rule."



## NATIONAL CONFERENCE TAKES BIRTH

In the summers of 1938 and 1939, the political atmosphere in Kashmir was changing rapidly. On June 28, 1938 the Working Committee of the Muslim Conference met at Srinagar and passed, after a heated discussion lasting 52 hours, a resolution recommending to the General Council to allow all people to become its members, 'irrespective of their caste, creed or religion'. In August of the same year was issued a 'National Demand' under the signature of twelve leading members of various political parties. The ultimate goal of the people according to this 'Demand' was "to bring about complete change in their social and political outlook and to achieve responsible government under the aegis of the Maharaja". Among the signatories were Sheikh Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, G.M. Sadiq, Jia Lal Killam, Shyam Lal Saraf, and Sirdar Budh Singh. Next year the recommendations of the Working Committee were accepted by the General Council and thus the National Conference came into existence. Thenceforth the National Conference fought many battles and weathered many [storms but in spite of these vicissitudes the Conference representing the will of the people grew from strength to strength.

But the forces of communalism and reaction nurtured so long by interested parties, were not entirely absent from Kashmir. When the Muslim Conference was converted into the National Conference, there was opposition from among some of the Muslim Conference workers who continued to keep the old body alive. Though leading a tottering existence, the old Muslim Conference received a new lease of life a few years later at the hands of Mr. M.A. Jinnah and his Muslim League.

The first session of the National Conference was held in October, 1939 and the Conference passed a resolution embodying what was termed the "National Demand". The resolution demanded responsible Government, the essence of which, it pointed out, was a legislature composed entirely of members elected by adult franchise based on a joint electorate, with some seats reserved for the minorities. The legislature must have control over the State budget, except that on military services, on the subjects classed as political and foreign and on the payments of debts and liabilities contracted and incurred by His Highness in Council. This was the minimum demand of the Conference, and the resolution continued to represent its official view during the years of war.

The Maharaja's government conceded some more timid reforms in 1939. Seven more seats were thrown open to election which in reality increased the representation of the vested interests. Two members were

elected by the Tazimi Sirdars (Chief Landlords) whose number was twenty-seven in all. Two more were to be elected by Jagirdars whose total strength in the State was only 175. Two were to be elected by a constituency of 700 land-holders who paid an annual land tax of Rs. 250/- or more, and one was to be elected from a constituency of 700 pensioners.

The "Quit India" movement launched by the Indian National Congress in 1942, which resulted in the arrest of the leaders of the Congress and the consequent turmoil, deeply moved the politically awakened people of the State. On 16th August, 1942, the National Conference in their resolution said that "the demand of the Congress is based on just reasons. The Working Committee condemns the reign of terror and repression which the Government of India have launched by declaring the Indian National Congress illegal, by the arrest of leaders, and by shooting down unarmed people."

The National Conference, however, followed the advice of the Congress given to the people of all Princely States, not to actively join the movement. The years of war, of scarcity of foodstuffs and other essentials of life demanded untiring efforts on the part of the leaders to prevent black-marketing by unscrupulous dealers in these commodities. The National Conference took a large share in the distribution of foodstuffs and fuel through the People's Food Committees, and stood between starvation and the people, rescued them from scarcity and want in spite of bureaucratic interference and inefficiency.

The war years also saw the growing importance of the Maharaja with the British Government. He gave unstinted help to, and placed all his resources at the disposal of the Government of India in their prosecution of the war. Consequently he was appointed to the Imperial War Cabinet and in this capacity toured the Allied Front in the Middle East. Any action that he would take against the people's movement received support from the Imperial Government.

#### "NEW KASHMIR" PLAN

But the National Conference did not remain politically inactive. In 1944 it adopted a programme of socialistic pattern of society as its goal. It laid down a plan for "an all-sided advance along all avenues of human activity regulated in a democratic manner on a country-wide scale". The plan covered agriculture, industry, transport, distribution, utility services, currency and finance. The scheme was based on the "democratic principle of responsible government with the elective principle applied from the local Panchayat right up to the Legislative Assembly."

The new ideology gave meaning to the common man's struggle for freedom, and assured his unstinted loyalty to the Conference and its leaders. But before a campaign could be launched for its realisation, Mr. Jinnah and the Muslim League appeared on the scene.

The political atmosphere in India had during a decade prior to the end of the second world war taken a vicious turn. Whereas on the one hand the Indian National Congress under the inspiring leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru was gaining ground against the forces of British Imperialism, the Muslim League led by Mohammad Ali Jinnah was working for the partition of the country on the basis of religion. In 1940, the League passed the Pakistan Resolution demanding the setting up of an independent State for Muslims in India, on the ground that Hindus and Muslims formed two different nations. Whatever common interests and cultural heritage there had been between the Hindus and Muslims were ignored, even repudiated. Being contrary to the best traditions of the country and the evolution of political consciousness among the people of India, the "two nation" theory of Mr. Jinnah could not be accepted by the National Congress, which from its very inception represented the nation comprised of different classes, creeds and interests.

In Kashmir where the ruler was a Hindu but the majority of the people Muslims, one might have supposed communal politics would thrive, but the people through centuries of their history had developed a tolerant and peaceful outlook on religious belief. Hatred between one religious community against another was abhorrent to them, and having lived in perfect harmony throughout the course of their chequered history, the Muslim League ideology was foreign to their best traditions and did not, therefore, find favour with them.

#### SPIRITUAL SYMPATHY WITH INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS

The people and their main political organisation, the National Conference, believed like the Indian National Congress in nationalism based on community of interests, not on religion. The leaders of both the organisations had undergone long terms of imprisonment, faced the batons and rifles of the armed forces of the authorities in their fight for freedom. Naturally a spiritual sympathy and kinship had grown up between the two organisations. No wonder Jawaharlal Nehru's visit to Kashmir in 1940 aroused widespread enthusiasm among the people of all classes. The interest shown in, and sympathy expressed for the struggle of the State's people for freedom by the Congress endeared it to the Kashmiris. Mr. Jinnah and the League, on the other hand, scrupulously kept themselves aloof from the State people's struggle.



## JINNAH'S DISAPPOINTMENT

Mr. Jinnah now tried to win the sympathies of the Muslims of Kashmir for his "two-nation" theory. Some of his workers attempted to resuscitate the old Muslim Conference which a few communal reactionaries had managed to keep alive but which had no popularity and practically no platform. In the spring of 1944, Mr. Jinnah went to Kashmir ostensibly "for rest" and with no professed idea of "taking part in politics". He was given a reception by the National Conference who in their address of welcome said : "We Kashmiris today receive you as a prominent Indian despite ideological differences we have with you. We hope that you, along with other leaders of India, will try to arrive at a solution which will go a long way to emancipate the teeming millions of India." To this Mr. Jinnah replied, "I am happy to see all classes and groups combined here to receive and honour me." But scarcely had an hour passed when in reply to another reception given by the resuscitated Muslim Conference, he said, "Muslims have one platform, one *Kalma* and one God. I would request the Muslims to come under the banner of the Muslim Conference and fight for their rights." In other words, he was advising the Muslims to adopt the same line of politics which they had discarded a decade back. This brought a sharp rejoinder from the National Conference who said that "ills of this land can only be remedied by carrying Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs together."

Presently it appeared that Mr. Jinnah's "rest" was not divorced from politics. He presided over the annual session of the Muslim Conference and in his speech attacked the National Conference as a 'band of gangsters'. This was too much for Kashmiris to bear and when a few days later, he wanted to address a public meeting at Baramula, the temper of the people ran so high that he had to be removed to a safer spot for fear that injury might be done to him by the hostile people, a majority of whom were Muslim. The Muslim Conference could win little following and Mr. Jinnah had to leave Kashmir disappointed.

During the fall of that year a similar fate met the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, V.D. Savarkar, at the hands of the Hindus of Kashmir. When Mr. Savarkar wanted to explain his theory of "Hindu State" in a public meeting, he was bluntly told by the President of the Yuvak Sabha, Pandit S.N. Fotedar, that his ideology was against their traditions of communal amity and no Hindu was prepared to listen to him. Like Jinnah, Savarkar had to go back a disappointed man.

In the summer of 1945 a unique session of the National Conference was held at Sopore, 30 miles to the north of Srinagar. The

meeting of the Standing Committee of the All-India States Peoples' Conference under the Presidentship of Jawaharlal Nehru was an important feature of the session. Representatives from many States joined in the deliberations and some important decisions were taken to break the feudalistic structure of Princely States, created and nurtured by the British Government in India. Maulana Azad, Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and other leaders of the Congress also attended. Speeches made at the session laid pronounced emphasis on the identity of political and social ideologies of the people of Kashmir with the people living in the rest of India, and fired the youthful imagination of the politically awakened Kashmiris.

While the second world war was at its highest pitch and the Maharaja enjoyed the fullest powers without any interference from the British Indian Government, N. Gopalaswami Aiyangar relinquished the post of Prime Minister. His exit from the State service marked the end of an orderly but stiff government. The Maharaja then appointed several men to the post in quick succession—Raja Sir Maharaj Singh, Col. Sir K.N. Haksar, Sir B.N. Rau. None of these gentlemen made any effort to understand the problems of the State or make a contribution to solving them. The people had made rapid advance in political education and demanded a large measure of reform.

And when in the summer of 1945, Sir B.N. Rao handed over the charge of Prime Minister of the State, the Maharaja appointed a Kashmiri, Ram Chandra Kak, to succeed him. An ambitious careerist, Kak entered the State service as the librarian of a local college and with his remarkable aptitude for hard work and his knack of winning a place on the right side of his superior officers, he ultimately succeeded in getting the post of Minister-in-Waiting of the Maharaja. Sir B.N. Rao's exit gave him the chance of securing the coveted Prime Ministership in a Council of Ministers which included two popular members.

#### "QUIT KASHMIR" MOVEMENT

While the National Conference was holding its annual session in Srinagar in 1944 in which it adopted the programme of a socialistic pattern of society and democratic government, the Maharaja announced his decision to include in the Cabinet two popular ministers to be chosen from among the elected members of the Praja Sabha. Though meagre in content the reforms were accepted by the National Conference as a step towards future cooperation between the Ruler and the ruled and selected a nominee of its own on the Cabinet. But in actual day-to-day working the popular minister had to face adminis-

trative non-cooperation, indifference of non-elected Ministers and found himself powerless even in the functioning of his own departments. Hence on the 17th of March, 1946, he resigned. A month later, in May 1946, the National Conference launched its "Quit Kashmir" movement for the transfer of power to the people.

The 'Quit Kashmir' movement launched by the National Conference gave to Kak the opportunity to assume and wield unlimited authority in the State. A reign of terror was let loose and within a few hours of the arrest of the leaders of the Conference, hundreds of workers were arrested all over the Valley according to a pre-arranged plan. But before the iron hand of Kak could pounce upon Bakshi Ghulam Muhammed and G.M. Sadiq, they had left the State to direct the movement from the rest of the country, and by their indefatigable efforts they kept the people fully posted with the real aims and objects of the movement.

#### NEHRU'S ARREST

On hearing that the people of Kashmir were being made target of pitiless repression, Jawaharlal Nehru, who was at the moment engaged in important talks with the Cabinet Mission, rushed to the aid of the Kashmir people, but was arrested by the authorities after he had crossed into the State territory. The news of his arrest shook the whole of India, and fearing its repercussions, the Congress leaders called him back to Delhi for consultations. At the time when Jawaharlal Nehru rushed to Kashmir and defied the ban which had been placed on his entry into the State, Mr. Jinnah issued a statement in which he described the "Quit Kashmir" movement as "an agitation carried on by a few malcontents who were out to create disorderly conditions in the State."

#### GANDHIJI VISITS KASHMIR

Meanwhile far-reaching developments were taking place in the country. The British Government had announced the transfer of complete power to Indians. The partition of India was in the offing. The people of Kashmir locked in a mighty struggle with the forces of feudalism, could not give thought to these vital questions. In such hard times when tempers were rising high in the rest of India, Gandhiji found time to visit Kashmir in July, 1947. His visit proved comforting to the harassed people. He was impressed with the communal harmony that prevailed in the State and said that in an India which had become dark all around, Kashmir was the only hope. Speaking at Wah (Pakistan) on his return in August, 1947, he said in a prayer meeting



that in the large gatherings that he saw, "it was very difficult for me to know whether it was predominantly Muslim or Hindu."

Mahatma Gandhi's visit was still being talked of in the homes and streets of Srinagar when news came that the Maharaja had dismissed Ram Chandra Kak and appointed a former Revenue Minister, General Janak Singh, in his place. There was an outburst of spontaneous joy among the people of all communities who associated Kak with a repressive regime. They now looked up for a clear lead from the National Conference with regard to the most important question—accession of the State to India or to Pakistan.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### INDEPENDENCE AND AFTER

WHILE THE PEOPLE OF KASHMIR under the leadership of the National Conference were engaged in a bitter fight with feudalism and bureaucracy as represented by the Maharaja's government—when thousands of workers were undergoing various terms of imprisonment for offering *Satyagraha* or civil disobedience—events of a vital and far-reaching consequence were taking place in the rest of the country. British Imperialism was crumbling fast before the massive blows of Indian national movement and the day of India's independence was drawing near. By 1947 the British were convinced that India could no longer be held in thralldom and acting on the advice of the Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, the British Government published a Plan for the partition of India. On June 17, the Indian Independence Act was passed stating that on August 15, 1947, the British would relinquish their authority in India which was to become an independent country. A part of its territories with a preponderating Muslim majority was to be constituted into Pakistan and recognised as an independent and sovereign State.

#### THE PARTITION

The partition was necessitated by the sinister passions aroused by intractable and interested parties among a section of communal-minded Muslims and Hindus during the long struggle for emancipation of India from foreign domination. The freedom movement was aimed at not merely freeing India from British domination but also building a secular, independent and democratic India. Hindus, Muslims, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis—all made sacrifices for this great cause. Against it stood many sectarian, pseudo-religious, feudal and other vested interests. The Muslim League represented one of these. It set itself against the mainstream of Indian nationalism, endeavouring to sow disruption and discord by perverting religious beliefs to incite hatred. The League provided a counterpoise to the growing national movement and, as such, it received encouragement and support from various quarters. But the national movement grew in strength and when at the end of the second world war it became clear that the British

could no longer rule India and that the Indian national movement was on the eve of its final victory, the League intensified its activities and caused tremendous strife, aided no doubt in this by its Hindu counterpart. It was in this context that India was partitioned between composite Indian nationalism on the one hand, and reactionary political sectarianism, on the other. India accepted the partition as it provided the only peaceful means of attaining freedom.

The medieval concept of nationality based on religious belief has always been foreign to the Kashmiri. The long tradition of religious toleration has created in him a secular outlook on human relations, which has time and again asserted itself during the course of his long history. True, there were moments when attempts were made by interested parties to arouse communal passions—in 1923 for example when there were a few skirmishes in some parts of the State and in 1931 when the freedom struggle started—but very soon the people regained their balance and kept to the path of communal amity and religious toleration. By 1947 the politically conscious people of Kashmir had gained enough maturity to avoid the snares of communal hatred as preached by the leaders of the League. The partition naturally gave them a severe shock, but they were not directly affected by it.

For, it applied only to what was known as British India. Besides the fear that Pakistan which touched the borders of the State and might create difficulties in maintaining communications with the outside world, the Kashmiris were faced with a graver problem, namely, the future of the Jammu and Kashmir State itself. On the lapse of Paramountcy of the British Crown over all the princely States, of which there were 562 when India attained independence, the problem arose as to what was to be done with them, because they were not directly ruled by the Government of India.

#### PARAMOUNTCY OF BRITISH CROWN LAPSES

The question of their future was defined in a memorandum (dated May 12, 1946) on 'States Treaties and Paramountcy' presented by the Cabinet Mission to the Chancellor of Princes in India.

"When a new fully self-governing or independent Government or Governments come into being in British India, His Majesty's Government's influence with these Governments will not be such as to enable them to carry out the obligations of paramountcy. Moreover, they cannot contemplate that British troops would be retained in India for this purpose. Thus, as a logical sequence and in view of the desires expressed to them on behalf of the Indian States, His Majesty's Government will cease to exercise the



powers of paramountcy. This means that the rights of the States which flow from their relationship to the Crown will no longer exist and that all the rights surrendered by the States to the paramount power will return to the States. Politically arrangements between the States, on the one side, and British India, on the other, will thus be brought to an end. The void will have to be filled either by the States entering into a federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India, or failing this, entering into particular arrangements with it."

To this effect the British Government made an announcement simultaneously with the announcement of the partition scheme on June 3, 1947 :

"His Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that the decisions announced above (about partition) relate only to British India and that their policy towards the Indian States contained in the Cabinet Mission Memorandum of May 12, 1946, remains quite unchanged."

The legal provision under which the Princely States could enter into a "federal relationship with the successor Government or Governments in British India" was to be found in the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and the India Act of 1935. These two Acts of the British Parliament, which created the legal basis for the independence of India, provided that a State could accede to the Dominion of India by an Instrument of Accession executed by the ruler thereof. It was also provided that Indian States acceding in this manner shall become an integral part of the Union of India. This legal position was affirmed on several occasions by the late Mr. Mohammad Ali Jinnah who was the architect of Pakistan and its first Governor-General.

But to prevent a dislocation of the arrangements "with regard to customs, transit and communications, posts and telegraphs, or other like matters", during the period between June 17, when the Government of India Act was passed, and August 15, when India became independent, the Ruler of a Princely State could enter into a standstill agreement with either or both the independent Dominions.

In the absence of accession, however, the Union of India was responsible for the defence and protection of Indian States, since it had succeeded to the British Crown in the same way as the British Crown had succeeded the Mughal Emperor. The United Nations recognised the Union of India as the successor State to the pre-independence Government of India by allowing it to continue its original membership, while admitting Pakistan, on her application, as a new member State.

This was the legal and constitutional position in which the Jammu and Kashmir State stood on the eve of independence. But there were several practical difficulties which made the question of accession of the State to any one of the Dominions complicated. The foremost was the attitude of the Ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh, himself.

#### MAHARAJA'S INDECISION

For years after the lease of Gilgit to the British, the Maharaja was given wide latitude by the Government of India in the exercise of his powers. With his unstinted support to their war effort his position became all the more strong, and when there arose an extensive movement among the masses to end the British rule in India, the Maharaja's hands were further strengthened by the British to enable him to kill opposition to his rule in the State. This explains the strong measures that his Prime Minister, Ram Chandra Kak, took to suppress the 'Quit Kashmir' movement launched by the National Conference.

All these years the Maharaja was dreaming of an independent Kashmir State protected and aided by the British Crown. He, as many of his class, could not visualize the exit of the British from India and the end of the all-powerful British Empire. Encouraged in his ideas by several of his British officials in whom he appears to have placed trust, he refused to see and understand the dynamic changes that were taking place in the political scene in India. He cherished the dream of his State standing "independent, of course with friendly and cordial relations with both the Dominions".

Though all the States acceded to India or Pakistan on various dates before or immediately after 15th August, 1947, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir delayed his decision in regard to accession. He had clamped the popular leaders and a large number of their followers behind prison bars and had shut his eyes to the historic forces that were shaping the destinies of the one-fifth of the world's population. He little thought that these very forces were to determine the future of himself and that of his State too.

To apprise him of the grave risk he was taking by his indecision, Lord Mountbatten visited Kashmir on June 19, 1947, and remained there for four days. "When he got there," records Campbell-Johnson, "he found the Maharaja politically very elusive and the only conversations that took place were during their various car drives together. Mountbatten on these occasions urged him and his Prime Minister, Pandit Kak, not to make any declaration of independence, but to find out in one way or another the will of the people of Kashmir as soon as possible and to announce their intention by 14th of August, to send

representatives accordingly to one Constituent Assembly or the other.” “On every one of those four days,” said Lord Mountbatten in a speech shortly after his return from his historic mission to India, “I persisted with the same advice : ‘Ascertain the will of your people by any means and join whichever Dominion your people wish to join by August 14, this year.’ He did not do that, and what happened can be seen. Had he acceded to Pakistan before August 14, the future government of India had allowed me to give His Highness an assurance that no objection whatever would be raised by them. Had His Highness acceded to India by August 14, Pakistan did not then exist, and therefore could not have interfered. The only trouble that could have been raised was by non-accession to either side, and this was unfortunately the very course followed by the Maharaja.”<sup>1</sup>

But he was not indecisive about the oppressive measures he was adopting against the National Conference. The people were in great distress and it was at the request of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed who was indefatigable in his exposition of the issues involved in the freedom struggle going on in Kashmir, that Mahatma Gandhi paid a short visit to Srinagar in early August. He saw the Maharaja, but from his later speeches it appears was not successful in convincing him of the desirability of meeting the demand of the people for a constitutional government.

#### STANDSTILL AGREEMENT

The sands of time were running out fast, and fearing a breakdown of the communication system through Pakistan and the rich export trade with India, the Maharaja sought from both the Dominions a standstill agreement to come into effect on August 15, 1947.

The history of the standstill agreement is contained in the telegrams exchanged between the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir, on the one hand, and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, on the other. There was a similar series of telegrams between the responsible Minister in New Delhi and the Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir.

As a result of the telegrams that passed between the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Kashmir, a standstill agreement was arrived at “with regard to her (State’s) communications, supplies and post office and telegraphic arrangements”<sup>2</sup>

On the same date (12th August, 1947) an identical telegram was sent to the Government of India stating that the “Jammu and Kashmir

1 *Time Only to Look Forward*, pp. 268-69.

2 Sir Zaffarullah Khan, Security Council Official Records, 229th meeting, p. 101.



Government would welcome standstill agreements with the Union of India on all matters on which these exist at the present moment with outgoing British Indian Government. It is suggested that the existing arrangements should continue pending settlement of details and formal execution of fresh agreements." These arrangements, according to the Treaty of Amritsar of 1846, comprised the use of Indian forces if there was internal rebellion or invasion by a foreign government.

The Government of India, however, did not accept the offer immediately and telegraphed back :

"Government of India would be glad if you or some other Minister duly authorised in this behalf could fly Delhi for negotiating standstill agreement between Kashmir Government and Indian Dominion. Early action desirable to maintain existing agreements and administrative arrangements."

But before the Prime Minister could go to Delhi to discuss these matters, Kashmir was invaded. Therefore the standstill agreements which the State was trying simultaneously to conclude with the two countries were interrupted and other developments followed.

#### FRONTIER RAIDS AND ECONOMIC BLOCKADE

It was early in 1947 when serious communal riots and disturbances became the order of the day in the Punjab, and there were large-scale movements of refugees from one part of the province to the other, that the Maharaja had stationed his troops at several strategic points on the borders of the State. A British officer, Maj-General Scott, who was in overall command of the troops deployed them in small batches all over the frontier with the result that no reserves were available for meeting a large-scale invasion from across the border. However only a few days after Pakistan accepted the standstill agreement, Maj-Gen. Scott submitted his first report to the Jammu and Kashmir Government on the border raids from Pakistan. On 4th September, on the basis of his reports, the Kashmir Government protested by telegram to the West Punjab Government against armed Muslims from Rawalpindi district infiltrating into the State. Two days later there was a marked increase in this activity. Maj-Gen. Scott reported more armed raids into State territory by Pakistan nationals and soldiers on 13th, 17th, 18th and 28th September. On 3rd October, Kashmir Government protested to Pakistan against hundreds of armed people from Murree Hills in Pakistan operating in Poonch. Further incursions into Kashmir took place on various dates during October.

In contrast to Lord Mountbatten's assurance to the Maharaja that India would not object if he decided on his State acceding to Pakistan

in accordance with the established procedure, Pakistan was determined to coerce the State into accession to her, despite a Standstill Agreement which she had with the Ruler. Besides the several incursions by her armed forces and nationals into the State territory, she began an economic blockade of the State. Supplies of food, petrol and other essential commodities to Kashmir were cut off. Communications were tampered with and free transit of people was hindered.

The Government of Jammu and Kashmir made repeated representations to the authorities in Pakistan appealing to them to lift the blockade and stop violation of State territory. These representations brought forth only brazen denials. On October 15th, the Maharaja cabled to the British Prime Minister, whom he thought still to be the over-all protector of Indian States, about the economic blockade of the State by Pakistan and the beginning of the invasion from Pakistan in Poonch. He went on to say :

“People all along the border have been licensed and armed with modern weapons under the pretext of general policy which does not appear to have been followed in the case of internal districts of West Punjab. Whereas military escorts are made available for several other purposes, none is provided for safe transit of petrol and other essentials of life. Protests merely elicit promises which are never implemented. As a result of obvious connivance of the Pakistan Government, the whole of the border from Gurdaspur side up to Gilgit is threatened with invasion which has actually begun in Poonch.”

It was on the same day (October 15) that there began the siege of Fort Owen ; nearly 5,000 Pakistani raiders were involved in these operations.

Pressed on all sides by the hostile actions of Pakistan and realizing that the British Crown was powerless to help, the Maharaja tried to win back the support and good will of his subjects. He had early in August dismissed Kak and appointed temporarily a retired minister, Thakur Janak Singh, in his place. Two months later he appointed Mehar Chand Mahajan, a prominent jurist of Punjab, as his Prime Minister. To re-establish peaceful relations between the ruler and his subjects, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah and most of his colleagues were released from jail on September 29.

On their release, the leaders of the National Conference found Kashmir faced with the important question of whether she should accede to the Indian Union or to Pakistan, or remain independent. But there was another more crucial question which also awaited recognition

and solution, namely the freedom of the people. So they thought and said that this important question could be decided by the people of Kashmir only when they were free. They requested Pakistan not to precipitate a decision upon them, but give them time, and support the freedom movement of Kashmir. One of the leaders, G.M. Sadiq, went twice to Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, with the same request. The reply came in the form of the economic blockade and incursions of their armed forces into the State territory. By October 22, infiltrations and raids were transformed into a full-scale military invasion of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.

#### THE INVASION

Between the settled districts of the North-Western Frontier of Pakistan and the Afghan border lies that strip of hilly land that is known as the tribal territory whose area is 24,986 square miles and whose population is estimated at 2,378,000.

The people inhabiting this tribal area were a constant source of anxiety to the British Government. Sturdy, warlike and quick to pick quarrels, they are extremely poor and backward in education. It was the constant practice of these people to raid Indian villages within the British jurisdiction for loot. They kidnapped men, women and children for ransom. The British government tried to stop their depredations and purchase peace by paying them a huge amount of "hush money" every year. Even so, it was neither easy nor possible always to have peace on the Frontier. Indeed, the British government had sometimes to resort to aerial bombing to keep them down.

When the British transferred power, one of the problems left unsolved by them was that of the tribal people, and Pakistan had to tackle it. Crores of rupees were spent by the British out of Indian revenues to appease these people, but the newly-born State of Pakistan could ill afford to spend so much money on them. Besides, the leaders of Pakistan who upheld religion to be the basis of nationality would lose face if they treated the tribal people, their co-religionists, in the British way. There was again another menace growing rapidly in the North-Western Province, of the Pathanistan movement which demanded autonomy for the Pathans. It had to be nipped in the bud before the movement lured the Pathans both of the North-Western Frontier Province and the tribal areas into one hostile camp. The urgent need felt by Pakistan to force the issue in Kashmir, and secure its speedy accession to Pakistan contained a possibility of solution of more than one problem. To hold out to the poor tribal people the alluring promise of land and plenty in Kashmir, to give them a lurid



description of the supposed atrocities perpetrated on Muslims so that they might be worked up to fever pitch, and allow them a free run of the beautiful Valley, would secure Kashmir, solve the problem of the poor tribal people, kill the Pathanistan movement and secure Pakistan's safety and prosperity—all in one stroke! What was needed was expedition and promptitude.

So the tribal people were let loose on Kashmir territory. They had to march through miles of Pakistan territory to reach the borders of the Jammu and Kashmir State. We have already noted the intense activities of hostiles all along the 500-mile Pakistan border and their "softening" process set into operation. The raids, small and big, had tested, baited, decoyed and dispersed the forces guarding the security of the State. These raids grew into a regular warfare. On October 22, 1947, a large force of armed raiders entered Muzaffarabad in 300 lorries and began looting and burning. They were armed with modern weapons, including Bren-guns, Sten-guns, grenades, heavy mortars, anti-tank rifles and land mines and an unlimited supply of ammunition. They were led by Major-General Akbar Khan, under the name of General Tariq and other Pakistan officers fully conversant with modern strategy and warfare.

After the sack of Muzaffarabad the invaders continued their progress along the Jhelum Valley road towards Srinagar, bringing death and devastation to the inhabitants of villages and towns on the way. Their triumphant march was temporarily stemmed at Uri, a town 65 miles from Srinagar by the demolition of a bridge and the gallant resistance of about 150 men under the command of Brigadier Rajinder Singh of the State army, who was killed fighting a memorable last-ditch battle.

#### BRIGADIER RAJINDER SINGH

The heroic exploit of Brigadier Rajinder Singh and his ill-assorted band of a few regular soldiers, cooks, mess waiters and orderlies who had taken up arms on his orders, is unique in the military annals of the world. Born in the family of Jamwal Rajputs on June 14, 1899, he lost his parents at the age of four and was brought up by his uncle. He graduated from the P.W. College in Jammu and at the age of twenty-two was directly commissioned as Lieutenant in the State forces. He rose in rank quickly and by his abilities as a disciplined soldier and an able commander became Chief of Staff of the State forces on August 14, 1947.

On the fateful day of October 22, he was attending to his official duties at the Srinagar Cantonment when the news reached that a large-

scale invasion had taken place at Muzaffarabad and that the raiders were on their way to Srinagar. There were no reserves near at hand, and collecting all the available soldiers and non-combatants, he could with difficulty muster a small force of about 150 men. But the city had to be saved and the only way to do it was to stem the hostile advance on the road below Baramula. Brigadier Rajinder Singh decided to march at the head of the small column towards Domel, 112 miles from Srinagar.

But Domel fell and the enemy forces advanced and dug themselves in strategic positions at Garhi, 16 miles further up. They offered stiff resistance to the small column led by Rajinder Singh. Despite suffering heavy losses he grimly held on for some time and when the raiders tried to encircle his troops, he decided to pull out and withdraw to Baramula.

This withdrawal raised the morale of the enemy who advanced as far up as Uri. After reorganising his battered column at Baramula the Brigadier dashed to Uri. Facing the main body of the raiders there, he employed a different strategy, namely, to halt as long as possible the advance of the invaders to Srinagar. He destroyed the bridge which cut off the forward line of the raiders from the base. Attacked from three directions the Brigadier suffered heavy losses and withdrew his column to Mohora and then to Rampur along the Jhelum Valley road, with the raiders in chase. Here he offered a grim fight to the enemy for eleven crucial hours. But he had to pay a heavy toll and finally ordered the remnant of his men to withdraw. While they were fighting their way to a position of safety, Rajinder Singh guarding the rear single-handed, kept up a steady fire. It was here that an enemy bullet hit him in the right arm and another got embedded in the right leg. But this did not silence his gun. He was soon encircled by the raiders and killed.

But he had saved Srinagar by checking the advance of the enemy for three invaluable days. This interval had enabled the airfield in the capital to receive the first wave of defenders from India.

With no opposition now from the State forces, the raiders surged forward. Having meanwhile managed to construct a diversion, about a mile long, which must have required considerable engineering skill to build and was apparently effected by the sappers and engineers of the Pakistan army, they captured Mohora and damaging the power house there, plunged the city in darkness. It took them only a few hours to envelop and enter Baramula, the chief town in the Valley, which they captured on October 26.

## THE SACK OF BARAMULA

It was a calamity for the peaceful inhabitants of Baramula. Hundreds were cut down in cold blood. Houses were burnt and looted. No distinction was made between Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Christian. The entire Mission building of St. Joseph's Convent was ransacked and then burnt to the ground. The chapel was strewn with smashed glass and plaster. The Assistant Mother Superior, three nuns and a British officer's wife were killed. According to the correspondent of the *New York Times* who visited the town after the raiders were driven out by the Indian Army, the "surviving residents estimate that 3,000 of their fellow townsmen, including four Europeans and a retired British Army officer and his pregnant wife were slain."

There in Baramula they seized the young hero of the National Conference, Maqbool Sherwani, "interrogated" him for several days and at last tied him to a post in the centre of the town, drove nails into him and when he did not even then recant his belief in secular democracy, emptied their bullets into his body. For several days earlier when the tribesmen were terrorizing the countryside, "Sherwani, who knew every path in the Valley, began working behind the line, keeping up the morale of the besieged villages, urging them to resist and to stick together regardless of whether they were Hindus, Sikhs, or Muslims, assuring them that help from the Indian Army and people's militia was on the way. Three times "by skilfully planted rumours he decoyed bands of tribesmen and got them surrounded and captured by the Indian infantry. But the fourth time he was captured himself."

With the occupation of Baramula by the raiders, Srinagar itself was threatened. They, however, lost four valuable days in looting and killing in Baramula and when they after all marched on Srinagar, they met with resistance from the local militia and the Indian Army which ultimately proved to be their doom.

## NATIONAL MILITIA

For, at that critical hour in the history of Kashmir when the marauding invaders were a few miles from the capital, the National Conference took up the task of defending the city and surrounding districts against invasion. Thousands of volunteers from all communities came forward to offer resistance to the invader and under the inspiring leadership of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed a sizeable force was hurriedly trained in rifle shooting including a company of women volunteers. A night long vigil was kept for any tribesmen entering the city by stealth or any fifth columnist creating panic. All available civil



motor transport was requisitioned and kept ready for the Indian Army who were expected to come to the aid of Kashmiris in their hour of peril and misfortune.

#### ACCESSION OF THE STATE TO INDIA

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah flew to New Delhi to personally appeal to the Indian Cabinet to despatch armed forces to help Kashmiris repel the invaders. Meanwhile the Maharaja alarmed by the invasion of his State and by the prospect of devastation which seemed imminent appealed to India on October 24, for military help.

On October 25, a meeting of the Defence Committee took place in New Delhi under the chairmanship of Lord Mountbatten in which the Maharaja's request for supply of arms and ammunition was considered. At this meeting General Lockhart, the Commander-in-Chief in India, read out a telegram from the headquarters of the Pakistan Army stating that some 5,000 tribesmen had attacked and captured Muzaffarabad and Domel and that considerable tribal reinforcements could be expected. Reports showed that they were already little more than thirty-five miles from Srinagar. According to Campbell-Johnson "the Defence Committee considered that the most immediate necessity was to rush in arms and ammunition already requested by the Kashmir government, which would enable the local population in Srinagar to put up some defence against the raiders. The problem of troop reinforcements was considered, and Mountbatten urged that it would be dangerous to send in any troops unless Kashmir had first offered to accede."<sup>1</sup>

Following the session of the Defence Committee, V.P. Menon, Secretary of the States Ministry, was sent to Srinagar to explain the position to the Maharaja and to get an eye-witness report of the situation in Srinagar. "The information which V.P. [Menon] brought back to the Defence Committee the next day [October 26] was certainly disturbing. He reported that he had found the Maharaja unnerved by the rush of events and the sense of his lone helplessness. Impressed at last by the urgency of the situation, he had felt that unless India could help immediately, all would be lost. Later in the day, on the strong advice of V.P., the Maharaja left Srinagar with his wife and son. V.P. had impressed upon him that as the raiders had already reached Baramula it would be foolhardy for His Highness to stay on in the capital."<sup>2</sup>

The Defence Committee thereupon "decided to prepare to send

1 *Mission with Mountbatten*, p. 224.

2 *Ibid.*

troops by air the following day and to accept the accession if it was offered. On the same day Mr. Menon flew back to Srinagar, this time returning with both the signed accession and the request for troops, in addition to the arms and ammunition which were due."<sup>1</sup>

But irrespective of Kashmir's accession it was the duty of India to come to its aid in the hour of its peril. India was the successor State to the former British Government which was responsible for the protection of all the Indian States from foreign aggression.<sup>2</sup>

The accession of the Jammu and Kashmir State to the Union of India was accepted by the Governor-General, Lord Mountbatten, in precisely the same way as in the case of other Indian States. The accession was thus complete in law and in fact. Jammu and Kashmir State thenceforth became an integral part of India and its defence the concern of the whole country. Lord Mountbatten, however, wrote a separate letter to the Maharaja conveying his Government's decision "to accept the accession of Kashmir State to the Dominion of India." To remove any apprehensions that the people of Kashmir may have with regard to accession the Governor-General conveyed the assurance that in consistence with the policy of the Government of India "that in the case of any State where the issue of accession has been the subject of dispute the question of accession should be decided in accordance with the wishes of the people of the State, it is my Government's wish that, as soon as law and order have been restored and the soil cleared of the invader, the question of the State's accession should be settled by a refere-

1 Lord Birdwood, *Two Nations and Kashmir*, p 58.

2 Pandit Nehru elaborating this concept of India's status *vis-a-vis* the Indian States stated in his speech in Parliament on August 7, 1952 :

"By the removal of the British power from India in 1947, we were, to some extent, thrown back to the days when the British first came. That is an interesting and good parallel to pursue in other ways, too ; but I shall not pursue it, because it may lead to controversial matters. When the British power established itself in India, it became evident that no other power in India could remain independent. Of course, these powers could remain semi-independent or as protectorates or in some other subordinate capacity. Accordingly, the Princely States were gradually brought under the domain and suzerainty of the British power. Similarly when the British left India, it was just as impossible for odd bits of Indian territory to remain independent as it had been during their reign. At the time Pakistan was, of course, out of the picture. For the rest, it was inevitable that the Princes and others, whoever they might be and whether they wanted it or not, must acknowledge the suzerainty, the sovereign domain of the Republic of India. Therefore, the fact that Kashmir did not immediately decide whether to accede to Pakistan or to India did not make Kashmir independent for the intervening period. Since she was not independent, it was our responsibility as the continuing entity to see that Kashmir's interests were protected."

nce to the people.” It was a promise to the people of Kashmir which the Government of India fulfilled later with the holding of elections on universal adult franchise to the Constituent Assembly of the State which approved the State having acceded to India on October 26, 1947.

### FIGHT AGAINST AGGRESSION

On October 27, the first batch of Indian troops under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel D.R. Rai flew to Srinagar.<sup>1</sup> They flew because that was the only medium of transport left to them, at such short notice. By land, they would have been too late. Some 300 miles of precarious fair-weather road lay between the nearest Indian cantonment at Pathankot and Srinagar.

Over a hundred civilian aircraft were immediately mobilised to fly troops, equipment and supplies to Srinagar. Indian Air Force and civilian pilots and ground-crews rose to the occasion and worked day and night to make the air-lift a success. The ferry service to Srinagar continued unabated up to November 17, during which time 704 sorties were flown from Delhi.

Seldom in the history of warfare has an operation been put through with no previous planning and with many handicaps, not the least of which were almost non-existent lines of communication and a complete lack of intelligence of enemy dispositions.

When the first troops were flown for Srinagar, they were instructed to circle over the airfield before landing. They were not sure whether the airfield had not fallen into the hands of the enemy. As a matter of fact, the instructions of Col. Rai were not to land if there was any doubt on the point, but to fly back to Jammu. After an interval of tense suspense, at 10-30 a.m. a wireless flash from Srinagar announced the safe landing of the first wave of troops.

There was widespread jubilation among the citizens of Srinagar and the inhabitants of neighbouring towns and villages. For five anxious days they had carried on with normal life, kept the essential services going, and maintained a strict discipline. Their morale was high; they did not give way to panic, and they organised bands of volunteers to maintain law and order and keep a strict watch on strategic points. For five days they faced manfully the alarming reports of the raiders' advance and their eyes were constantly cast to the skies in the hope of seeing the first Indian plane coming with the sorely needed help and relief. They had collected all available motor-vehicles and kept them

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1 Information on this section has been culled from *Defending Kashmir*, Publications Division, Government of India.



ready to carry the first troops to the front. Local drivers were at the wheels ready to risk their lives in defending their land.

The dispatch of troops to Srinagar was the responsibility of the Delhi-East Punjab Command (now called Western Command), which had originally been formed as an operational command to co-ordinate the numerous internal defence duties in which the Army in Delhi and East Punjab was involved following the partition. Most units had got somewhat disorganised following the partition of the Army and the withdrawal of the British element.

Instructions to send a battalion to Srinagar were received by the Command headquarters at 1 p.m. on October 26. One battalion of the Sikh Regiment, under Lt.-Col. Rai, which was then employed on internal defence duties at Gurgaon, was ordered to concentrate at Palam airfield.

By midnight on October 26 - 27, the Commanding Officer of First Sikhs managed to assemble his battalion headquarters plus one company at Palam. Clothing, rations and ammunition were issued to the troops at the airfield, and by first light on October 27, the Sikhs were airborne.

Later in the day, one more company employed on railway protection duties arrived at Palam. The remainder of First Sikhs was still out on detachment duties and had to be brought to Delhi to be flown to Srinagar the following day.

#### COLONEL RAI'S HEROIC DASH

On October 27, when the first wave of Indian troops under Col. Rai landed in Srinagar, the invaders were already in Baramula. Thirty-five miles of fine tarmac road was all that lay between them and Srinagar.

Col. Rai's orders were to defend the airfield and consolidate his position. On landing, however, he found himself faced with a dilemma. He had to take a quick decision — the enemy was at Baramula, the strategic bottleneck which opens into the Srinagar valley. Once the invaders were allowed to enter and fan out into the Srinagar plains, the game was up.

Should he give immediate battle to the invaders — estimated at anything between 3,000 to 5,000 — at Baramula, with his woefully inadequate force or wait till reinforcements arrived? Col. Rai took the decision and crashed into the invaders' column at Baramula.

The civilian buses rushed his troops to within two miles of the town. Holding one company in reserve, he put in an attack with another company. He found, however, that it was not an ill-organised

rabble that he had to contend with but an organised body of men armed with light and medium machine -guns and mortars, divided into units and sub - units, and led by commanders who knew modern tactics and the use of ground.

Col. Rai's company was deployed on a hill along the main road. Sometime after battle had been joined, Col. Rai discovered that large parties of raiders were working their way around his flanks and that machine - gun fire was coming from the flanks as well as from the front.

There was a serious threat of both his companies being encircled and annihilated. Thereupon, Col. Rai decided to withdraw to Pattan, half way between Baramula and Srinagar. He got his reserve company away in buses and gradually began to pull out his leading company which was at that time committed. He himself remained with the forward section to make sure that all his troops moved back safely.

The last party of Indian troops had to run the gauntlet of heavy fire in order to escape the trap. Many fell dead, among them was Col. Rai himself — the victim of a sniper's bullet. But he had succeeded in his object — he had staggered the enemy, disorganised his column and halted his advance long enough for reinforcements to arrive from India. By his courage and dash vital progress in the saving of Srinagar was achieved.

The troops, however, left without a commanding officer, fell back to a point only  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Srinagar. But the same night they went forward again, reoccupied Pattan and went even further to the 26th milestone from Srinagar. There they found the raiders swarming around the countryside. They then fell back on Pattan, where they occupied a ridge and dug in.

Meanwhile, a brigade headquarters and a flight of IAF Spitfire Tempest, and Harvard aircraft for closer co-operation and air reconnaissance were flown from Delhi. The 161 Brigade arrived in Srinagar close on the heels of the First Sikh Regiment. Brigadier L. P. Sen, who won his DSO in the famous battle of Kangaw in the Arakan during the last world war, arrived in Srinagar and took over command of all Indian and State Forces in the Srinagar valley.

The situation in the first week of operations in Kashmir can best be described as "touch and go". The threat to Srinagar continued, even increased. For the Indian Army, the week was one of desperate struggle to gain time for adequate troops to be flown in from India. That struggle took the shape of offensive delaying actions.

Scanty intelligence reports of the raiders' movements indicated that there were at least four columns of raiders converging on Srinagar

and the airfield, one column moving from the west from Baramula, another from the south - west, a third from the north - west and fourth from the north.

On November 3, a company of the First Kumaon Regiment, which in the meantime had been flown in under Major Somnath Sharma, went out on a fighting patrol to Badgam, nine miles southwest of Srinagar and hardly half a mile from the airfield.

The company ran into an enemy force, 500 to 700 strong, who attacked supported by 3" and 2" mortars. The encounter lasted over four hours. Maj Sharma led his men with remarkable skill and inflicted many casualties on the enemy. Brig. Sen, realising that the Kumaonis were faced with a body of well armed raiders infinitely superior in numbers immediately dispatched reinforcements. But before they could reach the Kumaonis, Maj. Sharma was killed when a two - inch mortar bomb exploded near him.

When it was noticed that the raiders could bypass our position at Pattan, 17 miles outside Srinagar, and infiltrate into the city itself, Brig. Sen decided to pull back his troops to a point  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles due west of Srinagar city. In so doing, he strengthened the defence of the city as well as shortened the line of communication of his troops.

Since the withdrawal from Pattan almost coincided with the Badgam engagement, the raiders got away with the impression that the Indian Army was in full retreat. They thereupon concentrated their main body astride the Baramula road and faced our forces entrenched outside the city.

#### THE BATTLE OF SHALTENG

Thus, while the enemy was preparing for a final assault on the city, the Indian forces were fast building up for an offensive. Major-General Kalwant Singh arrived in Srinagar on November 5, and took over command of all the forces in Jammu and Kashmir. At the same time, one squadron of armoured cars adventured their way to Srinagar by the perilous 300-mile Banihal Pass and over rickety bridges fit only for light tourist traffic. In Srinagar, large crowds lined the route and loudly cheered the cavalcade as it rumbled past.

The raiders' main position had been spotted and the stage was set for the projected offensive. On the morning of November 7, the Indian troops attacked the enemy. At the same time one troop of armoured cars and a detachment of infantry which were patrolling in the Gandarbal area were ordered to manoeuvre back so as to take on the enemy from the rear. Brig. Sen sent one force of armoured cars and troops north of the Anchar Lake to go behind the raiders' positions which



were hinged on a village called Shalteng. He dispatched another column supported by armoured cars straight down the Baramula road and a battalion of infantry to attack the raiders' right flank. IAF fighters gave close support from the air.

The battle of Shalteng lasted 12 hours. Trapped from three sides, surprised by armoured cars and pursued from the air by the IAF, the raiders fled westwards in disorder, leaving behind 300 dead. The IAF, in this crucial engagement and during the follow-up, played a decisive role.

#### BARAMULA RECAPTURED

With this battle the Indian Army turned the corner. It was a decisive victory, which broke the back of the enemy drive, demoralised the invaders and enabled the Indians to go over to the offensive. It removed the threat to Srinagar once and for all.

Indian forces took up the pursuit and arrived in Pattan the same evening. The next day, November 8, they made for Baramula and after some skirmishes on the road, entered the town in the afternoon.

To their great disappointment, however, they found that the slight delay in their advance, caused by shortage of petrol, had enabled the main party of raiders to escape from Baramula along the road to Uri and Domel.

Even before they reached Uri, the Indian column ran out of petrol at least twice and had to wait for replenishment from Srinagar. The civilian buses were unsuitable and too few to meet the needs.

The momentum of this victory should have taken the Indian forces straight to Muzaffarabad if only they had enough petrol and military motor transport. It was later revealed that the invaders were in a headlong retreat and there were no enemy troops in reserve even in Muzaffarabad to make a stand against the Indians. In between, most of the bridges had, of course, been blown up by the retreating forces some of them beyond repair and others incapable of permitting even a diversion.

On November 14, Indian troops entered Uri, 65 miles from Srinagar, without much of a battle. With its recapture the first and most hazardous phase of the Kashmir campaign had been completed. An immediate threat to the Srinagar valley had been removed.

#### REVOLT AT GILGIT

As the tribal invaders were triumphantly driving up the Domel road towards Srinagar, a local revolution was being hatched up at Gilgit under inspiration from Peshawar. In pursuance of the British Government's announcement that the control and administration of

Gilgit would be returned to the Jammu and Kashmir State late in July 1947, the Maharaja deputed Brigadier Ghansara Singh as Governor of Gilgit. No sooner did the latter arrive at Gilgit than he was faced with a catalogue of demands from the officers and JCOs of the Gilgit Scouts, who under the direction of certain British and Muslim Officers had conspired to get Gilgit merged into Pakistan. The Governor, however, tried to win the sympathies of the local population who welcomed the return of Maharaja's rule. But the Gilgit Scouts under one Major Brown continued to remain sullen and as the tribal invaders were knocking at the gates of Srinagar, the tension increased at Gilgit. On midnight of October 31, the Governor's residence was surrounded by the Scouts who demanded his immediate surrender. The Governor was put under arrest and a provisional government was formed by the rebels under Major Brown. On November 4, he ceremonially hoisted the Pakistan flag in the Scouts Lines in Gilgit and in the third week of November Peshawar sent its political agent to rule over the area. The Mirs and Rajas of the Gilgit district had no hand in the revolution, nor did the people of the territory take active part in it.

#### JOUST WITH "GENERAL WINTER"

During the winter months, the Indian Army in Kashmir fought two enemies. Holding the raiders at bay was easy. Throughout the period, the raiders could not get an inch of territory, and every attempt to break through or bypass Uri was beaten back resolutely. But the Indian Army's joust with "General Winter" was indeed a grim and heroic struggle.

A majority of Indian troops had never seen snow before. Nor were they armed with special snow-fighting equipment. With the blocking of the only land route to Srinagar by snow and the stoppage of the air service, the supply situation became acute.

During these difficult months the Army in Kashmir largely remained on the defensive, confining itself to long-range reconnaissance and offensive patrolling. Its battle against the elements was fought by lone piquets perched on snow-clad mountains and by patrols venturing out into uncharted country, breasting the blizzards and hailstorms.

The raiders made repeated attempts to storm our piquets one after the other. Every time they were beaten back. Failing either to break through or bypass Uri, the raiders advanced over the track linking Muzaffarabad with Tithwal and made for Handawor, on the northern approaches to the Srinagar valley. An Indian column met them there and dispersed them, recapturing some of the villages that had fallen into their hands.

All this time, the battle against "General Winter" was being

fought with grim tenacity. At one stage in February, the Indian Army's supply depot at Srinagar had just ten gallons of aviation spirit in stock. The civil population—whose morale was a most important factor in these operations—suffered acutely from a shortage of salt, which sold at Rs. 10/- a kilogram in Srinagar.

The brunt of the battle against winter was, however, borne by Indian Army drivers and sappers. In the past, for four winter months of the year, the Banihal Pass, choked with snow, used to remain closed to traffic. The Madras Sappers and Miners valiantly strove to keep this pass, the bottleneck of the Jammu-Srinagar road, clear of the snows.

Thanks to their efforts, from December to the end of March, three convoys, consisting of a total of 300 vehicles, got through to Srinagar. Each time, however, a few vehicles at the tail end of the convoy got stuck and remained buried in the snow.

Though the winter battle had been won, the melting snows brought forth a new problem for the Indian Army engineers and lorry drivers to contend with. While the Banihal Pass was cleared of snow, the 200 mile tenuous road, hewn in the side of the Himalayan ranges was now plagued with landslides. Large chunks of mountain, with trees, boulders and all, slipped on to the road and completely obliterated it.

The sappers and the pioneers were kept busy sweeping these chunks of mountain out of the way, as supply convoys remained held up.

While it froze and covered the Kashmir Valley with a white mantle, winter appeared in a different guise in Jammu. Here it was all slush and quagmire created by the winter rains which impeded mobility and made life miserable for our troops. Abnormal rains even swept away bridges along the life-line from Pathankot and constricted supplies to the troops.

Thus, while the Kashmir front hibernated, the activity in Jammu intensified, thanks to the advantages enjoyed by the enemy on this front, in the shape of shorter, better and more numerous lines of communication.

As against the single 75-mile road that we possessed from Jammu to Naushera, which was repeatedly rendered unusable by the winter rains, the raiders relied on shorter lines of communication consisting of the first class all-weather Jhelum-Mirpur road and Sialkot-Jammu road, besides numerous other tracks, to supply their troops.



Stung by their initial reverses against the Indian Army and enjoying as they did many material advantages, the hostiles in Jammu occupied themselves during the winter months in spirited attacks. One or two temporary successes were gained by them, as in the case of the recapture of Jhangar. In their own territory they were well entrenched, while our troops remained on the defensive, owing to the limitations imposed by winter.

Winter also gave our commanders, for the first time, some respite to think and plan and regroup. Kept on their toes from the moment the troops landed in Srinagar on October 27, they were kept hurrying about, plugging in leaks in the hastily prepared defences, relieving encircled State Force garrisons and rescuing thousands of refugees.

Maj. Gen. Kalwant Singh, GOC, Jammu and Kashmir Force, had valiantly struggled to build up a fighting machine from scratch, even while he fought a well prepared and resolute enemy. Now he gradually geared that machine for planned offensive operations.

Srinagar had been rendered safe. The menace to the Pathankot-Jammu line of communication had been effectively removed. By a forward policy and the institution of a chain of piquets, the Pakistan-Jammu border had been largely sealed off against nuisance raids from across. Our forward positions had been consolidated. The situation in the territory already held by the Indian Army had been stabilised and normal life restored.

The task of looking after and administering relief to thousands of rescued refugees also fell largely to the lot of the Indian Army. While Srinagar was blest with communal harmony, the situation in Jammu was complicated by communal tension, which made the task of Gen. Kalwant Singh and his troops all the more difficult.

It was a back wash of the terrible happenings in the adjacent Punjab. As non-Muslim refugees poured into Jammu from across the border, with their harrowing tales of suffering and misery, they produced repercussions in the State resulting in retaliatory disorders.

As winter gave way to spring, the back had been broken of all these problems, and Gen. Kalwant Singh now planned to move forward.

#### THE LEAP FORWARD

The first objective of the spring offensive in Jammu was Rajauri, 30 miles north-west of Naushera. The operation was distinguished by careful and elaborate ground and air planning. The advance began on April 8. The 30-mile stretch of country which the Indian troops had to traverse was thickly wooded and well defended with enemy machine-

guns and mortars.

Barwali ridge, seven miles north of Naushera, was the first hurdle. The ridge was held by uniformed, steel-helmeted hostiles armed with 3-inch mortars, two medium machine-guns and eight light machine-guns.

The approaches to Barwali ridge were difficult and a frontal attack was necessary. Moving under cover of heavy fire and effectively supported by tanks, a Dogra battalion charged the enemy's positions and occupied their objective by 4 p.m.

Chingas, half-way to Rajauri, was the next objective. Lying on the old Mughal route linking Naushera and Rajauri, Chingas was the base from which the hostiles had launched their abortive assaults on Naushera.

From Barwali ridge the Indian column split up and fanned out, with different strategic features around Chingas and Rajauri as their respective objectives. Kumaonis and Jats overcame stiff opposition on a feature parallel to Barwali ridge and reached Katari village overlooking Chingas. Chingas itself was entered by armoured cars. The armoured cars found the town in flames. The raiders had resorted to arson and murder before departing. It was a "scorched earth" policy with a vengeance.

On the right flank, Rajputana Rifles operating from Kot maintained their advance and reached Mal village. On the morning of April 12, the Jats came down into the Chingas valley and after crossing the Tawi captured a hill overlooking Rajauri. An armoured column followed by Kumaonis entered Rajauri late that evening. This operation saved the lives of 1,200 to 1,500 refugees, mostly women. Of these 300 to 500 had been lined up to be shot when the Indian column arrived.

In this operation, Indian troops had not only to contend with well prepared and well laid enemy positions but also numerous landslides and roadblocks. It cost the hostiles approximately 500 killed and the Indian Army suffered 11 killed and 40 wounded.

The atrocities committed by the hostiles in Rajauri put Baramula in the shade. Our troops expected a warm welcome from 5,000 refugees as well as local inhabitants. When they entered the town, they were appalled by an eerie silence. Rajauri was a city of the dead and dying.

Before the hostiles departed, they had carried out a general massacre of the population. Heaps of rubble, mass graves and decomposing corpses told the tale. So did the sword and hatchet wounds and

burns on the person of the survivors, who slowly trickled back to their destroyed homes.

Of the 600 houses in the town, half had been destroyed, some by fire and others by picks and shovels. In the bazar, all that was left were a few pots and pans and some cooked chappaties left behind by the raiders in their haste to get out. This was the second massacre that Rajauri had witnessed. The first was staged when the raiders entered the town in the flush of victory.

The enemy reacted to their loss of Rajauri by mounting another determined attack on Jhangar. On April 16, six thousand raiders stormed that outpost, but were beaten back and suffered 200 casualties.

Representing a first thrust into the enemy's jaw, Jhangar became the object of repeated and energetic assaults by the raiders, who could never reconcile themselves to the position and badly needed that vital road junction between Mirpur and Kotli.

The spring in Kashmir was devoted by both sides to building up for the impending burst of operational activity on that front. While the Indian Army was ambitiously planning a drive from Uri in the direction of Domel and Muzaffarabad, the enemy was busy bolstering up his defences to meet this threat and, at the same time, was pushing north-eastward via Gilgit with the intention of opening another front and knocking at the backdoor of the Srinagar Valley.

Gen. Thimayya who was in command of the Srinagar Division projected an offensive directed towards Muzaffarabad on the western border. Brigadier Sen was to advance from Uri along the Domel road, while Brigadier Harbux Singh was to make a wide sweeping right hook via Handawor to Tithwal—a point hardly 18 miles on the northern flank of Muzaffarabad.

#### CAPTURE OF TITHWAL

Starting on the night of May 17-18 from Handawor, 40 miles north-north-east of Uri, Brigadier Harbux Singh's column made good progress, and on May 23, entered Tithwal, covering 40 miles in six days through difficult roadless country.

The raiders were taken completely by surprise. Thirty-five prisoners, including Lieutenant-Colonel Sikandar Khan and four other ranks of the Pakistan Army, and one 3-inch mortar were captured at Tithwal. The enemy casualties in this advance were 67 counted dead, our own 17 killed and 31 wounded.

The capture of Tithwal signified a major blow to the raiders, as it was dangerously close to Muzaffarabad, their main base, and it disrupt-



ed their main line of communication with their forward bases in the north and north-east.

Supporting the direct attack on Tithwal, another column simultaneously advanced towards Trahgam, 20 miles north-west of Handawor. Notwithstanding tough opposition, they pushed on and then striking towards Tithwal, finally ended up by capturing Nastachan.

Brigadier Sen set out from Uri on May 20, with one battalion north of the Jhelum, two battalions south of the road and one battalion and one armoured column along the road. There were no illusions about the task assigned to Brigadier Sen. Pitted against him was the largest and strongest concentration of the raiders, well equipped and armed with artillery.

There was heavy fighting for features on either side of the road. Some changed hands thrice in one day. Pandu, an important hill feature, 10 miles north-east of Uri, was captured on May 23. Here a complete enemy ration and ammunition dump fell into our hands. Two prisoners belonging to the Frontier Force Rifles and the Frontier Regiment of the Pakistan Army were also captured. On May 27, the column advanced up to Urusa, overlooking Chakoti, the raiders' entrenched position along the road.

#### PAKISTAN ARMY COMES INTO THE OPEN

The threat to Muzaffarabad, represented by this drive and its initial successes at Tithwal and around Uri, spread panic and alarm in Pakistan and "Azad Kashmir". If the Indian Army were allowed to reach Domel and Muzaffarabad, all would be lost for the cause of the raiders. Pakistan, which till then had helped the invaders covertly, now came out into the open and flung in more regular Pakistan Army battalions to stem the tide of the Indian Army's drive westward. They also brought up 4.2 inch mortars and medium guns.

Beyond Urusa, the Indian Army met the hard core of enemy resistance in the shape of regular Pakistan battalions. The fighting was fierce and desperate. Our advance was held up. Between May 20 and 27, the enemy losses were 1,126 killed, six prisoners captured and a large number wounded. Our own casualties were 51 killed, 80 wounded and four missing—very heavy, compared with the Indian Army's previous record in the Kashmir campaign.

As the advance of the main column came to a halt, a subsidiary column was sent out north of the Jhelum. At the same time, Brigadier Harbux Singh was ordered to strike towards Muzaffarabad from Tithwal. The former column concentrated at Pandu on May 29 and

captured a 6,875 foot high feature. The enemy was dislodged only after three bayonet charges. His casualties were 20 killed and 35 wounded. His losses in equipment were 16 light machine-guns captured. In the meantime, the column from Tithwal cleared the area north of the Kishenganga.

Then weather took a hand. It rained ceaselessly for two days, converting dry nullahs into raging streams and grounding our aircraft. Both the columns were being maintained by air. The operation had to be postponed. The column from Uri returned to its base.

Yet another manoeuvre was attempted—this time, a left hook. A Gorkha battalion was sent down south along the Urusa nullah, while another battalion advanced to Ledi Gali. Amidst a hail of grenades and bullets, the Gorkhas captured the 10,924 foot high Pir Kanti ridge on June 28, with a *kukri* charge. The enemy casualties were 54 counted killed ; our own 7 killed and 51 wounded.

On July 10, the U.N. Commission on Kashmir arrived in India. The Commission appealed to both sides to refrain from offensive activity while they carried out their investigations. The Government of India immediately responded to the appeal and the Indian Army in Kashmir and Jammu was directed not to undertake fresh offensive action.

Pakistan, however, paid little heed to the appeal and launched a counter-attack at Pandu and recaptured it and also attacked our positions north of Kishenganga in the Tithwal area.

Pakistan, which had till now strenuously denied direct participation in the Kashmir fighting, confessed to the U.N. Commission that since May the Pakistan Army battalions had been fighting in Kashmir and that the Pakistan Army headquarters were in overall command of the operations in Jammu and Kashmir on their side of the line. The reason advanced was that the Indian Army's summer drive constituted a threat to Pakistan interests in Kashmir as well as across the border.

Since the push began on May 17, General Thimayya's troops had cleared a 11-mile stretch of road between Urusa and Uri, and captured Handawor, Kupwara, Keran and Tithwal, and established a forward position within 18 miles of Muzaffarabad and cut the enemy's line of communication to the north. In terms of territory, they had liberated 3,500 square miles.

About this time, in Jammu, the activity was still confined to sparring at the enemy, preliminary to bigger things to come. Offensive patrolling around Jhangar, Naushera and Rajauri was intensified.

Another attempt was made to relieve Poonch, this time from

Rajauri. Simultaneously a column from Rajauri and a column from Poonch set out on June 15, and met at Potha on June 17.

The link-up with Poonch, however, proved temporary, as we lacked the requisite number of troops to maintain it.

#### BRIGADIER USMAN KILLED

All the time Jhangar continued to be the favourite target of the enemy's artillery practice. On the night of July 3-4, the shelling of Jhangar was more intense than usual. Some 600 shells were pumped into our positions in Jhangar that night. One of them took the life of Brigadier Mohammad Usman, the hero of the battle of Naushera—an officer who distinguished himself as an outstanding soldier, a fearless leader and popular man who was loved by his *jawans* and trusted by the local civilian population.

He was the first Brigadier to be killed in Kashmir campaign. At his death there were rejoicings in "Azad Kashmir" territory as well as in Pakistan, as he had become a terror to the enemy. In India he was hailed as a national hero. His body was flown to Delhi, where he was given a State funeral, with full military honours. The Governor-General, the Prime Minister and other Cabinet Ministers attended the funeral.

#### THE ARCTIC FRONT

The raiders' plans for the summer lay in a different direction—the north-easterly direction. Losing all hopes of piercing the Indian Army's steel ring in the west at Uri and in the south-west in Jammu, they sought new adventures in the remote, semi-arctic, barren districts of Baltistan and Ladakh.

Between those districts and the Kashmir valley stood the gaunt, forbidding Himalayan ranges, with a few difficult, fair-weather, snow-covered mountain tracks serving as the only link. Their very inaccessibility made those districts safe for the activities of the raiders, putting them beyond easy range of the Indian Army's attention.

The raiders' projected summer campaign had three objectives aimed at dispersal of our forces—opening two more fronts, one in the north via Gurais and the other in the north-east via Zoji-la, and "bagging" as much territory as possible in Baltistan and Ladakh. Gurais and Zoji-la are the northern and north-eastern gateways respectively to the Kashmir Valley.

All winter the raiders built up Gilgit, their possession in the northern frontier area, as the base for their summer campaign. Columns



of raiders moved down from Gilgit and infiltrated southwards and south-eastwards.

By January, the pressure on the small State Force garrison in Skardu increased. Accompanied by a large number of refugees, the garrison of two companies shut themselves up in the Skardu fort. The raiders encircled the fort and bypassed it on their eastward movement towards Kargil and Ladakh.

Repeated attempts from Srinagar to send relief to the besieged Skardu garrison were foiled by the difficult nature of the country, particularly in winter.

Though neither reinforcements nor supplies in any appreciable quantity could reach Skardu, the garrison, ordered to fight "to the last man and last round", held on grimly.

In the meantime, bypassing Skardu, the raiders overpowered another small State Force garrison at Kargil and then captured Dras, and thus cleared the way to Ladakh and Leh, its capital, the coveted objective of the eastward drive.

When the raiders infiltrated into the Ladakh district and skirmished with State Forces, the threat to Leh became imminent. The remnants of the State Forces dotted all over the Ladakh valley fell back on Leh to strengthen the defence of the town. From Srinagar were sent two officers and 15 other ranks to prepare the defences of the town. A party of Buddhist soldiers of the Indian Army had also been sent to Leh in February.

On May 24, Air Commodore Mehar Singh undertook the most daring operation yet in his colourful career—a flight to Leh along an uncharted route, at 23,000 feet and over the world's highest mountain ranges. He flew without even oxygen. Accompanying him on the flight was Gen. Thimayya. Mehar Singh landed on a rough improvised strip in Leh, constructed by a Ladakhi engineer, 11,554 feet above sea level. Two companies of Gorkhas were flown to Leh by the IAF in May and June.

The measures were taken in the nick of time. On July 11, 1,000 raiders, armed with a 3.7 howitzer, launched an attack on the outposts of Leh. The attack was repulsed. As the pressure on Leh increased, the demand for supplies and reinforcements became insistent and urgent. Once again, the difficulties of terrain and the winter conditions were the major obstacles.

There were two land routes to Leh. The one from Srinagar passed through the snow-covered 11,578 foot high Zoji Pass and through Kargil. Only 40 out of the 230 miles of the route were motorable. The

rest of the journey had to be performed on horse or on foot. The route wends its way between and up and down bleak snow-mantled mountains. With Kargil in enemy hands, this route was out of the question. The second route to Leh was from Manali in East Punjab which was equally difficult and circuitous, running over 200 miles through thick jungles and Himalayan ranges.

Speedy help was the need of the moment. IAF transport planes became once again the only resort. Dakotas fitted up with improvised oxygen apparatus, opened a ferry service between Srinagar and Leh. Landing on a strip, 11,500 feet high, was no picnic. The aircraft kept their engines running while unloading and reloading for if the engines were switched off, they might not restart at that altitude.

The Leh garrison energetically built up its defences with the help of the supplies flown in by IAF. Ladakhi volunteers were organised and trained into a local militia to fight side by side with the Indian and State forces.

Almost simultaneously with their eastward drive, the raiders moved down south from Gilgit into the Gurais valley, and passing over the Razdhanangan Pass (11,586 feet) got to Tragbal overlooking Bandipur, on the Wular Lake, 35 miles north of Srinagar.

Gen. Thimayya, in the meantime, got ready to meet this threat from the north. Soon after the devastating air strike which had driven the enemy out of Tragbal, Army engineers "got cracking" on a jeep track to Tragbal, 10,000 feet above sea level.

The first jeep motored to Tragbal on May 21. Mules and porters carried ammunition and supplies another eight miles to Razdhanangan, where was established the base for our operations. Two infantry battalions and a mountain battery were concentrated for the job. Facing our troops and entrenched in the Gurais valley were five companies of the Frontier Constabulary, 250 Chitral Scouts and 300 Gilgit Scouts, well armed and equipped and led by regular Pakistan Army officers.

Gurais is a valley through which flows the Kishenganga, dominated on either side by a series of ranges of the Himalayas, running parallel to each other and nowhere below 11,000 feet, with most of them snow-covered all the year round. D-Day was June 25. The operation largely consisted of climbing up and wrestling from the enemy a series of steep snow-mantled features. The process began with the capture of Menon Hill (12,857 feet) and Shete Hill (11,978 feet) and culminated in the conquest of the forbidding 14,218 foot high peak, Kesar. This peak was assaulted by our troops in a blizzard in the middle of the night.

Wet and shivering, the Indian Army troops kept up the momentum of their advance under a hail of machine-gun and mortar fire and were in Gurais by June 28. Behind the capture of Gurais lies the story of phenomenal endurance and perseverance by the Indian Army troops and their engineers. It was a mountaineers' war fought in arctic conditions. Our troops were poorly clad for that kind of winter. Forty-five mules died in the cold and the mountain guns had to be man-handled in blizzard and snow.

The fleeing raiders left behind a trail of their dead. The raiders also lost heavily in equipment and supplies. The most precious booty captured by our troops was the Frontier Constabulary blankets. Almost following on the heels of our advancing troops, Indian Army engineers unrolled a jeep track, from Bandipur to Gurais, a distance of 42 miles, within four weeks.

In the north-east, the raiders penetrated the Zoji-la and infiltrated into the Sonamarg valley. The Patialas guarding this gateway to Srinagar reacted energetically. They immediately engaged them and chased them beyond the Zoji-la. The Patialas mounted guard at the Zoji Pass by establishing piquets at 16,000-foot high peaks, while a jeep track crept towards them from Sonamarg.

On August 14, the Skardu garrison was at last overwhelmed and surrendered to sheer weight of numbers. The State Force troops resisted till the last, with no hope of either relief or victory.

With the fall of Skardu, as apprehended, the raiders doubled their pressure on Leh. In August another company of Gorkhas was flown into Leh. In the same month two more companies of Gorkhas plus 800 rifles were also sent to Leh along the 203-mile mountain track via Manali in East Punjab. Yet another column followed them along the same route on September 12, with 400 mules and 1,000 porters. Thus the defences of Leh were reinforced betimes to meet the danger.

#### THE BATTLE OF ZOJI-LA

As the precious summer months were fading out, the Indian Army had the satisfaction of securing the safety of the Kashmir Valley against invasion from the north and the north-east.

But two important jobs still remained outstanding. Both the tasks had to be accomplished before winter, if a calamity were to be averted. These were (a) reopening the road from Srinagar to Leh and removing the menace to the Buddhist district of Ladakh, and (b) the relief of the Poonch garrison, which had gallantly held out for a year against repeated assaults.



The Zoji Pass, 64 miles north-east of Srinagar, which links the Kashmir Valley with Ladakh, is dominated by high peaks on either side and is about two miles long, debouching into the Gumri basin.

Indian troops effectively controlled the western approaches to the Zoji-la, but the raiders held three ridges around the pass.

With plenty of time to choose their defensive positions, the raiders had sited their weapons to cover the defile along which our troops would have to advance.

Several attempts at the reduction of the enemy positions having failed it was then decided that movement from our side was possible only by night or under cover of fire from tanks. The first alternative was ruled out as the hours of the night would prove insufficient for completion of the operation.

The second alternative was workable, if only the tanks could be brought up to this height and all the distance from Jammu. The tanks could sit in the pass with impunity, ignoring the enemy small-arms fire, and blanket his bunkers with shells, while our infantry advanced. But if tanks were to be brought, a road had to be constructed.

The bold decision was taken. In less than two months, the Thangaraju road — named after Major Thangaraju who planned the project — from Baltal to Zoji-la, was laid down. At places the road had to be hewn out of sheer rock.

From Jammu to Baltal, seven Stewart ("Honeys") tanks travelled a distance of 260 miles *incognito* and under strict secrecy. They were covered with shrouds to conceal their identity. On the way, the tanks negotiated the frail Ramban bridge.

From Baltal to Zoji-la, the tanks negotiated their way around slippery hairpin bends and up a gradient of 3,000 feet in four miles.

D-Day was October 20. Rain and snow on October 20 compelled postponement of the operation, and at one time it looked as though it could not be launched until the following spring. November 1 was fixed as the last possible date for launching the operation, because any delay beyond that date would have made stocking across the Zoji-la impossible, as the pass became blocked with snow in December.

Fortunately the weather cleared up in time, and under the natural cover of cloud, the tanks moved out at 10 a.m. on November 1. It was snowing as the tanks mounted the Zoji-la track. From the jeephead, the road constructed by our sappers meandered forward for two miles. Whether any track existed beyond that point nobody knew.

The tanks moved forward, crossed the Zoji-la and gingerly stepped on to the "no man's land" in the Gumri basin. Solely

relying for guidance on air reconnaissance reports, the tanks forged ahead through snowdrifts, glaciers, mountain streams and over boulders to reach the foot of Chabutra Hill.

The enemy opened up a barrage of fire, which recohetted harmlessly off the tank armour. Then the tank guns barked and systematically destroyed about 25 enemy bunkers and seized full control of Gumri by midday. Behind the tanks, the infantry moved in without much opposition.

The enemy was surprised and demoralised by the sight of the tanks in Gumri, which he had never expected. At 9 p. m. on November 1, Patialas under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Sukhdeo Singh, set out from the Gumri basin. Walking surreptitiously throughout the night, a company of Patialas reached Machoi and covered the enemy from behind.

On finding themselves encircled on all sides, the hostiles were completely demoralised. Those who tried to flee were good targets for our riflemen, others surrendered and saved their lives. On the "North Ridge" our troops found a dismantled 3.7 howitzer. The enemy was obviously trying to carry it in parts while running away to safety.

The Patialas rested at Machoi on November 2 as they were on dry rations for more than 40 hours and the Rajputs under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Girdhari Singh pushed towards Matayan, six miles to the north-east of Machoi. Matayan eventually fell into our hands on November 4 at 3 p. m.

Covering over ten miles of rugged terrain infested with enemy snipers, and wiping out all opposition, the Indian forces reached the Dras plain at 4.20 p.m. on November 15. Our Force Commander, Brigadier H. L. Atal, Commander of 77 Para Brigade, was met by a delegation of two villagers from Dras who welcomed the Indian troops and announced that the hostiles had cleared out of Dras at 2 p.m.

On reaching Dras our troops recovered rifles, Bren-guns, 50 cases of 3-inch and 2-inch mortar bombs, blankets, ground-sheets warm jackets, medical stores and 3,000 maunds of firewood.

During the entire operation, IAF aircraft gave close support to our marching columns and strafed enemy dug-in gun and mortar positions on the mountain slopes on either side of the defile in Zoji-la as troops pushed forward. IAF aircraft also dropped thousands of leaflets on Dras and surrounding areas, advising the local population not to abandon their homes.

Continuing the mopping up of hostile pockets beyond Dras, Indian troops, on the morning of November 23, established positions at Kargil, the important trade and communication centre situated on the track leading to Skardu in the north, Dras and Srinagar in the west and Leh in the east.

Meanwhile, from the other side, consolidating their positions in the Nubra valley, Indian troops cleared hostiles from Khalatse, 50 miles west of Leh. Khalatse, situated at the track junction from Gilgit and Skardu in the north-west and from Srinagar, Dras and Kargil in the south-west, is the gateway to Leh.

Now only 45 miles of tortuous snow-covered mountain track lay between our troops in Kargil and those in Khalatse. Moving along this track, an Indian Army patrol from Khalatse established contact with our forward troops at Kargil on November 24. The Indian troops then busied themselves with combing out the region for hostiles.

Thus the land-link between Srinagar and Leh was established after nearly six months. In the entire operation, the enemy suffered a total of 318 killed and 206 wounded. One enemy 3.7 howitzer, one 4.2-inch mortar, one 3-inch mortar and two 2-inch mortars and 14 rifles were captured. Our casualties were 40 killed, 86 wounded and 37 listed as missing. Casualties from frost-bite were 350.

#### THE RELIEF OF POONCH

In Jammu, Gen. Atma Singh launched his elaborately planned offensive for the relief of Poonch. By September, the hostile ring around Poonch had tightened and it threatened to strangle the garrison. The enemy brought up 25-pounders and put the airstrip—the only link with the outside world—out of commission. Intelligence and air reconnaissance reports indicated a heavy build-up in Bagh, an enemy base north-west of Poonch, with the obvious intention of extracting the thorn on their side, which was the Poonch garrison.

The first phase in the operation for the relief of Poonch comprised the capture of Thana Mandi, 12 miles north of Rajauri. After two days' push, Thana Mandi was secured. Its fate was sealed when Kumaonis captured Point 7,710. This feature had been strongly held by two enemy companies armed with two 3-inch mortars and four machine-guns.

With Thana Mandi in our possession, hostile pockets in the Riasi district east of the Thana Mandi-Rajauri track, were already in the bag, being cut off and isolated from their bases.

Now preparations for the second phase of the operation were



under way. The operation was to be carried out in three phases ; the capture of Pir Badesar and Pir Kalewa, the capture of Sangiot and its conversion into a firm base, and the final break-through and link-up with Poonch.

The enemy strength facing them was reported to be two battalions east of Rajauri-Thana Mandi, one brigade west of Rajauri, one brigade in Mendhar, on the way to Poonch, and one brigade south of Poonch.

Pir Badesar, 5,432 feet high, was a stronghold of the hostiles, overlooking the entire Naushera and Seri valleys north-east of Jhangar. The operation was launched under the command of Brigadier Harbhajan Singh on the night of October 14-15. In moonlight, a column of our troops, mostly Gorkhas, marched through difficult, mountainous, trackless country on to the enemy-held Giran village. A half-asleep sentry challenged our leading section and asked for the password. A burst of bullets was the answer he received. A moment later, there was a fierce exchange of fire. Before long, the last of the enemy fled, leaving behind his dead, dying and wounded.

After a series of skirmishes, which added to the demoralisation of the enemy, our advance column of Kumaonis was fast scaling Pir Badesar, and an hour before sunset, they were on top. The enemy's losses in this operation were 102 killed and 9 prisoners and 27 rifles captured.

The Pir Badesar operation was a deception. As intended, the move put the enemy on the wrong scent, giving the impression that our objective was Kotli instead of Poonch.

Pir Kalewa, a commanding feature astride the Rajauri-Thana Mandi road, was captured by another brigade on the afternoon of October 26. This was comparatively an easier job, the enemy's losses being four killed and many more believed killed and wounded.

After consolidating their successes at Pir Badesar and Pir Kalewa and dispatching more men to defend the Pathankot-Chhamb stretch of the Jammu-Pakistan border, the Indian Army resumed the offensive for the link-up with Poonch.

The next phase of the operation. i.e. the capture of Sangiot, was altered, as the sappers preferred to build a road to Poonch via Mendhar. The enemy had one strong brigade located in Mendhar, and another brigade at Ramgarh.

On the night of November 7-8, 5 Brigade moved forward to secure the right flank of Mendhar, while 19 Brigade took up the task of securing the left flank. The Rajauri column was detailed to capture Ramgarh fort and features in the vicinity, to protect the left flank of 19

Brigade. Meanwhile, the battalion at Pir Badesar was demonstrating towards Kotli, and the battalion at Point 7,710 was demonstrating towards Thana Mandi. Bhimber Gali and Ramgarh were to be taken in the first bound and Bhimber Gali was then to be made into a firm base for further advance.

After encountering heavy resistance from hostiles, the columns moved forward. As the sun was dipping behind the hills, Bhimber Gali itself was in our hands. Our positions were consolidated during the night and the next day, November 9, Point 6,207 was taken. The capture of Point 6,207 gave us a clear view of an enemy concentration in Turti, about six miles south of Mendhar. One thousand hostiles with animal transport concentrated in the area presented an ideal target for our guns and mortars. The enemy fled in utter confusion, leaving behind at least 60 dead.

The total of enemy casualties in the course of the 18-mile Indian advance from Rajauri to Bhimber Gali was 175 killed, many more wounded and 20 taken prisoner. Large quantities of stores and equipment, including standard and paratroop rifles, 3-inch mortar bombs, small-arms ammunition, signal cable and foodstocks fell into our hands. The enemy also left behind loads of anti-Indian hate-propaganda posters and leaflets.

The Rajauri column encountered heavy opposition at Ramgarh fort, five miles north-west of Rajauri, and the surrounding height. The fort area, on top of a steep, pine-clad projection, was defended by three hostile battalions. The resistance was broken and the fort itself captured by midday on November 9.

Two hundred hostiles were believed to have been killed in the fight for Ramgarh. The booty included 5,000 rounds of small arms ammunition, 38 3-inch mortar bombs, five to six miles of cable, one loudspeaker and chairs and tables and a Pakistan flag.

With Ramgarh in our hands, Indian troops from Chingas and the Pir Badesar area linked up with Ramgarh, thus removing the large enemy bulge towards Rajauri.

At Bhimber Gali, the Indian forces resumed their advance along both the flanks.

With the enemy well entrenched and the approach to it most difficult, a frontal attack appeared to be the only alternative, with the inevitable accompanying loss of lives. The enemy was also holding features south of Mendhar in greater strength. The plan was accordingly changed and 19 Brigade was ordered to perform a right hook.

The night of November 19-20 was selected as the D-Day for final link-up operations. 168 Brigade from Poonch advanced and captured features south of Poonch. 5 Brigade captured Point 5,982 and effected the link-up with the Poonch column at 2 p.m. on November 20. 19 Brigade captured Topa ridge. Mendhar itself was secured on November 23 and the features south of Mendhar were also taken. And Brigadier Pritam Singh, the defender of Poonch, and Brig. Yadhunath Singh, commanding the leading relief column, shook hands. At Topa ridge the Indians captured one medium machine-gun, two 3-inch mortars, 20,000 rounds of small-arms ammunition, 200 mortar bombs, 60 grenades, 200 blankets and 20 mules.

Though the commander of the Poonch garrison had shaken hands with the Commander of the relief column, a lot of work yet remained to be done to insure the link-up and the safety of Poonch. The hostiles still had the town within range of their shells. To remove this threat an attack was launched on Salotri ridge. The ridge was taken after overcoming stiff resistance. Along with it came more booty—one Bren-gun and two V.B. magazines, two spare barrels, two rifles, 2,300 rounds of small arms ammunition, cables, a microphone and a wireless set.

The capture of Salotri ridge exposed the enemy gun positions, and he had to pull them out. After the link-up, the Poonch garrison freed Suran and Mandi valleys astride the tracks to the north to Kashmir.

Having accomplished their appointed tasks in Jammu and Kashmir the Indian Army was now again on the defensive. While every enemy attack on our positions was resolutely repulsed, Indian troops, under strict orders from the Army headquarters, refrained from embarking on any fresh offensive operations. But IAF kept a strict vigil over enemy territory. Enemy concentrations were strafed around Kotli and Bagh with the object of dissolving their build-up for offensive activity in western Jammu.

On December 14—while the cease-fire was still under negotiation between India and Pakistan—the hostiles laid down the biggest artillery bombardment of the campaign on our position around Naushera. They used 5.5 medium guns, a complete regiment of 25-pounders, 3 7 heavy ack-ack guns and 75 mms from medium tanks. Between 11.15 a.m. and 8 p.m. that day, the hostiles fired 2,500 shells into an area seven miles radius of Naushera. At the farthest point, they picked on targets at Beri Pattan ten miles south-east of Naushera.



Simultaneously, Pakistan's Sherman tanks fired at our position from an area two miles south-west of Sadabad. They were engaged and dispersed by Indian gunners. IAF aircraft on reconnaissance also encountered heavy ack-ack fire from 40 mm anti-aircraft guns.

The cease-fire came into force a minute before midnight on the first day of the year 1949, which brought to a close a 15-month gruelling campaign for the Indian Army. Launched upon within a month and a half of the country's freedom, under every imaginable handicap and without any planning whatsoever, the Kashmir campaign was a fiery test for free India's Armed Forces. Out of the test they emerged with flying colours.

### KASHMIR IN THE SECURITY COUNCIL

When on October 26, 1947, the Maharaja signed the instrument of accession and the Governor-General of India accepted it, the defence of Kashmir as an integral part of the country became the concern of the Government of India. And when Indian troops were flown to Srinagar on the morning of October 27, to drive the raiders out of the State, there was a sharp reaction to this move from the side of Pakistan. Mr. Jinnah who had moved up from Karachi to Lahore to be nearer the scene of operation and to watch the swift march of raiders on to Srinagar, seems to have felt greatly dejected at their failure to achieve the objective. He, therefore, in a moment of bitter disappointment ordered the acting commander-in-chief of his forces, General Sir Douglas Gracey, to dispatch troops to Kashmir. The General being fully aware of the shortcomings of the troops which were under his command and were still disorganised and badly equipped, was not prepared to obey Mr. Jinnah's instructions without the approval of Marshal Auchinleck, who was the supreme commander in charge of administering the partition of the Indian Army. Auchinleck flew to Lahore at the express request of General Gracey and succeeded in persuading Mr. Jinnah to cancel the order.

Mr. Jinnah thereupon turned to diplomatic negotiations and invited Lord Mountbatten and Prime Minister Nehru to Lahore for a discussion on the situation. Pandit Nehru could not undertake the journey due to ill-health and so Lord Mountbatten went alone to Lahore where on November 1, he had a long session with Mr. Jinnah.

Mr. Jinnah presented a three point proposal—a cease fire, withdrawal of the forces of Indian Dominion and the tribesmen, and a plebiscite under the joint control of the two Governors-General. Lord

Mountbatten declined to accept the proposals pointing out his constitutional inability to act without consulting his Cabinet. Lord Mountbatten during the course of discussion, however, asked the common-sense question of how Mr. Jinnah could be responsible for withdrawing the tribesmen if he had no control over them, to which Mr. Jinnah replied, "If you do this, I will call the whole thing off."

It was at this meeting that Lord Mountbatten suggested that a plebiscite be held under the auspices of the United Nations. But Mr. Jinnah promptly rejected the idea.

#### PAKISTAN'S AGGRESSION ON KASHMIR

Meanwhile it was becoming increasingly clear to Indian forces engaged in driving out the tribal raiders, that Pakistan was giving all-out support to them in the shape of transport, arms, ammunition and military leadership. In several sectors Pakistan soldiers without uniform were actively fighting the Indians. Heavy artillery and anti-aircraft guns were freely brought into action and the Pakistan bases across the borders were used to build up reserves and supplies for the hostiles. The Indian army had captured prisoners, arms and documents in the course of their advance, proving that Pakistan was directly concerned in operations against India in Jammu and Kashmir State.

"That Pakistan", reported the *London Times*, "is unofficially involved in aiding the raiders is certain. Your correspondent has first hand evidence that arms, ammunition and supplies are being made available to the Azad Kashmir forces. A few Pakistani officers are also helping to direct their operations..... And however much the Pakistan Government may disavow intervention, moral and material support is certainly forthcoming."<sup>1</sup>

Then there is the evidence of an American Air Force Sergeant, Mr. Haight, who enlisted as a volunteer with the raiders and actively fought against Indian forces, with the rank of Brigadier-General. After some months while on his way to America he revealed to the correspondent of the *New York Times*, that "gasolene—scarce and strictly rationed commodity—was supplied plentifully to the raiders by the Pakistan authorities..... Mr. Haight also found Pakistan Army Personnel running the Azad Kashmir radio station, relaying messages through their own Pakistan Army receivers, organising and managing Azad encampments in Pakistan, and supplying uniforms, food, arms and ammunition which, he understood, came from Pakistan Army

<sup>1</sup> *The Times*, (London), January 13, 1948.

stores through such subterfuges as the 'loss' of ammunition shipments."<sup>1</sup>

"Five years later in the summer of 1952, the Khan of Mamdot claimed from the Pakistan Government the sum of 68,000 rupees which he asserted, as Chief Minister of Punjab at that time, he spent out of his own pocket to facilitate the tribesmen's invasion."<sup>2</sup>

Thus it was aid from Pakistan that was keeping the Kashmir "war" going. The Government of India had only two alternatives if they were to expel the invaders from Kashmir soil which after the accession was Indian territory. They had either to carry the war into the enemy's camp, namely Pakistan territory which was furnishing the raiders with not only men and material, but also with bases of operation, or they had to dissuade Pakistan from giving this aid to them.

In his several telegrams, Pandit Nehru appealed to the Prime Minister of Pakistan to deny assistance to the invaders. But all these efforts failed.

#### INDIA'S COMPLAINT TO THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Anxious for a peaceful settlement, India offered various proposals, none of which was accepted by Pakistan. Any action by India to attack the bases of the invaders in Pakistan would have meant direct conflict with Pakistan. The Prime Minister of India, in a letter dated the 22nd of December, 1947, informed the Prime Minister of Pakistan that if Pakistan did not deny to the invaders assistance and the use of Pakistan territory for operations against the State, India would be compelled to take such action, consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Charter, as it might consider necessary to protect its interests. There was no response from the Pakistan Prime Minister. On January 1, 1948, India submitted a formal complaint to the Security Council under Chapter VI of the Charter, as India was anxious to avoid a direct conflict with Pakistan.

All proposals and offers for resolving the situation which India had made in her direct approaches to Pakistan, naturally lapsed when India took the matter to the Security Council.

The Government of India, in its complaint to the Security Council stated :

"In order that the objective of expelling the invader from Indian territory and preventing him from launching fresh attacks

1 *The New York Times*, January 29, 1948.

2 Korbel, *Danger in Kashmir*, p. 95.



should be quickly achieved, Indian troops would have to enter Pakistan territory ; only thus could the invaders be denied the use of bases and cut off from their sources of supplies, and reinforcements, in Pakistan. Since the aid which the invaders are receiving from Pakistan is an act of aggression against India, the Government of India are entitled, in international law, to send their armed forces across Pakistan territory for dealing effectively with the invaders. However, as such action might involve armed conflict with Pakistan, the Government of India, ever anxious to proceed according to the spirit of the Charter of the United Nations, desire to report the situation to the Security Council in accordance with the provisions of Article 35 of the Charter. They felt justified in requesting the Council to ask the Government of Pakistan :

- (1) to prevent Pakistan Government personnel, military and civil, participating in or assisting the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir State ;
- (2) to call upon other Pakistan nationals to desist from taking any part in the fighting in Jammu and Kashmir State ;
- (3) to deny to the invaders :
  - (a) access to and use of its territory for operations against Kashmir ;
  - (b) military and other supplies ;
  - (c) all other kinds of aid that might tend to prolong the present struggle."

#### PAKISTAN DENIES AGGRESSION

When the Security Council took up the matter for consideration, Pakistan emphatically denied that it had any part in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir. The Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sir Mohd. Zafrullah Khan, informed the Security Council that :

"...the Pakistan Government emphatically deny that they are giving aid and assistance to the so-called invaders or have committed any act of aggression against India. On the contrary and solely with the object of maintaining friendly relations between the two Dominions the Pakistan Government have continued to do all in their powers to discourage the tribal movement by all means short of war."

He, however, brought forth counter-charges against India particularly its attitude towards Pakistan, Junagarh and Muslims in general. He pleaded that the Kashmir situation should be viewed in this broader

perspective as it was a part of the deliberately hostile policy adopted by India towards Pakistan since partition.

In its resolution dated January 17, 1948, which was accepted by Pakistan and India, the Security Council called upon Pakistan and India :

- (i) "to take immediately all measures within their power (including public appeals to their people) calculated to improve the situation and to refrain from making any statements and from doing or causing to be done or permitting any acts which might aggravate the situation; and
- (ii) to inform the Security Council immediately of any material change in the situation which occurs or appears to either of them to be about to occur while the matter is under consideration by the Council, and consult with the Council thereon."

#### UNITED NATIONS COMMISSION ON INDIA AND PAKISTAN

Between January 22 and February 4, the Security Council held eight meetings on this matter. A number of draft resolutions were put forward by the members which were greatly weighted in favour of Pakistan. The Council continued to give patient hearing to Pakistan's numerous complaints. The real issue was being obscured. As the Prime Minister of India put it, "the nations of the world sitting on that body got lost in power politics."

Meanwhile fighting continued in Kashmir. On Indian representative's return from New Delhi where he had gone for consultation with the Government of India, the Security Council on March 10, resumed its consideration of the Kashmir situation. After several meetings a joint draft resolution was produced by the Security Council on April 17, which declared that the situation in Jammu and Kashmir was likely to endanger international peace and security, and therefore the Council recommended the setting up of a Commission of five members "to proceed at once to the Indian sub-continent and there place their good offices and mediation at the disposal of the Governments of India and Pakistan."

India, however, rejected the draft resolution as in the words of the Indian representative, Mr. Ayyangar, "it tars us with the same brush and makes us look like the co-accused". Pakistan also objected to the resolution, and considered that the measures recommended were not adequate to ensure a free and impartial plebiscite. But in spite of objections from India and Pakistan the resolution was adopted by the Security Council on April 21.

By May 7, the membership of the United Nations Commission on

India and Pakistan (UNCIP) was completed. The Government of India informed the Security Council that it would not be possible to implement those parts of the resolution against which it had already objected. "If, however, the Commission was sent, the Government of India would be glad to confer with it."<sup>1</sup>

#### PAKISTAN ADMITS AGGRESSION

"When at last the Commission was dispatched to India and Pakistan, it found the situation politically and militarily quite different from what the Security Council had thought it to be when it passed its mild and necessarily non-committal resolution in April."<sup>2</sup>

For, when the Commission landed in Karachi on July 5, 1948, they got "the first bombshell. Sir Zafrulla Khan informed the Commission that three Pakistan brigades had been on Kashmir territory since May. He explained the measure as an act of self-defense."<sup>3</sup>

Earlier the same Pakistan Foreign Minister had solemnly declared before the Security Council that Pakistan had no part in the invasion of Jammu and Kashmir and had even denied the giving of assistance to the irregulars. Persistent denials by Pakistan might have temporarily misled the unsuspecting and the unwary; but once the U. N. Commission arrived on the sub-continent of India, the facts could no longer be concealed.

Later in their resolution of August 13, the Commission at last recognised the falsity of Pakistan's denials in the following words :

"As the presence of troops of Pakistan in the territory of the State of Jammu and Kashmir constitutes a material change in the situation since it was represented by the Government of Pakistan before the Security Council, the Government of Pakistan agrees to withdraw its troops from that State."

Two years later on September 5, 1950, Sir Owen Dixon, who succeeded the Commission as U.N. Representative for India and Pakistan, reached a similar conclusion.

".....When the frontier of the State of Jammu and Kashmir was crossed.....by the hostile elements, it was contrary to international law and when in May, 1948, units of the regular Pakistan forces moved into the territory of the State, that too was inconsistent with international law."

1 S. C. O. R. Third Year No. : 74, pp. 6-7.

2 Korbel, *Op. Cit.*, p.119.

3 *Ibid*, p. 121



The fighting in Kashmir had become more extensive and more serious. The Commission, therefore, addressed itself to bringing about a cease-fire, and in pursuance of this objective had several meetings with the Governments of India and Pakistan. Finally after careful consideration they adopted a resolution on 13th August, 1948. The Government of India accepted this resolution by a letter dated the 20th August, 1948, while Pakistan declined to accept it. They were banking upon the success of their arms in Kashmir, having launched an all-out offensive to defeat the Indian forces and capture the State. Pakistan was thus directly responsible for postponing the cease-fire and for prolongation of hostilities.

By the fall of 1948, Pakistan High Command was convinced that it could not attain its objective by force, and thereupon they gave greater heed to the negotiations and the UNCIP formulated a further resolution to supplement the earlier resolution of August 13, 1948. The draft of this further resolution was accepted by the Government of India on 23rd December and by Pakistan on 25th December, 1948. India, however, accepted the resolutions, subject to the assurances contained in the correspondence between India and the Commission. As the terms of the resolution were accepted by both the Governments before it was actually passed by the Commission, a cease-fire was ordered from 1st January, 1949.

#### THE BASIC RESOLUTION OF AUGUST 13, 1948

The assurances given to the Prime Minister of India by the Commission were public and known to Pakistan. These assurances on the basis of which alone India accepted the two Resolutions, and which form part of the reports of the Commission and are official records of the Security Council, included the following :

- (i) Responsibility for the security of the State of Jammu and Kashmir rests with the Government of India.
- (ii) The sovereignty of Jammu and Kashmir Government over the entire territory of the State shall not be brought into question.
- (iii) There shall be no recognition of the so-called Azad (Free) Kashmir Government.
- (iv) The territory occupied by Pakistan shall not be consolidated to the disadvantage of the State of Jammu and Kashmir.
- (v) The administration of the evacuated areas in the north shall revert to the Government of Jammu and Kashmir and its

defence to the Government of India who will, if necessary, maintain garrisons for preventing the incursion of tribesmen, and for guarding the main trade routes.

- (vi) Pakistan shall be excluded from all affairs of Jammu and Kashmir in particular in the plebiscite, if one should be held.
- (vii) If a plebiscite is found to be impossible for technical or practical reasons, the Commission will consider other methods of determining fair and equitable conditions for ensuring a free expression of the people's will.
- (viii) Plebiscite proposals shall not be binding upon India if Pakistan does not implement Parts I and II of the resolution of 13th August, 1948.

The legality of the State's accession to India was never questioned by the Security Council or the Commission. In fact, on February 4, 1948, the U.S. Representative in the Security Council said :

"The external sovereignty of Kashmir is no longer under the control of the Maharaja.....with the accession of Jammu and Kashmir to India, this foreign sovereignty went over to India and is exercised by India, and that is how India happens to be here as a petitioner."

The Legal Adviser to the U.N. Commission came to the conclusion that accession was legal and could not be questioned. The Commission recognised this position in its report and its two resolutions of August 13, 1948, and January 5, 1949, as also the consequential position that Pakistan had no *locus standi* in the State except that of an aggressor.

The basic resolution of August 13, 1948, is in three parts. Part I requires a cease-fire, non-augmentation of military potential on either side and the maintenance of a peaceful atmosphere. Under Part II Pakistan had to withdraw all her forces, regular and irregular, while India was required to keep sufficient troops for the security of the State including the observance of law and order. Part III provided as follows:

"The Government of India and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their wish that the future status of Jammu and Kashmir shall be determined in accordance with the will of the people and to that end, upon acceptance of the Truce Agreement both Governments agree to enter into consultation with the Commission to determine fair and equitable conditions whereby such free expression of will be assured."

Obviously Part III of the resolution could come into focus only after Parts I and II had been fully implemented. The resolution of January 5, 1949, being subsidiary and supplementary to the resolution

of August 13, 1948, was merely an elaboration of the principle contained in Part III and had no practical significance till the resolution of August 13, 1948, was fully implemented. The word 'plebiscite' does not occur in Part III of the resolution of August 13. As recorded by the U. N. Commission, Pakistan violated Part I and continues to do so even today; Pakistan also refused to implement Part II by going back on the obligation of vacating the aggression.

In further implementation of the resolution of 13th August, 1948, and its supplementary of 5th January, 1949, Admiral Nimitz of United States of America was nominated as Plebiscite Administrator in March, 1949, and United Nations Military Observers were sent out to assist in establishing the cease-fire line and to investigate reports of its violation. By July, 1949, the cease-fire line had been demarcated.

#### BASIC ISSUE CLOUDED

Right from the time of the cease-fire, the efforts of the Commission and its various representatives and mediators were to induct the Plebiscite Administrator into office. Ignoring the basic and foremost requirement of the resolution, namely the withdrawal of aggression by Pakistan, these attempts clouded the issue. India in its desire for a peaceful solution of the question, did not insist on the implementation of the terms of the resolution and thus when it rejected some of the proposals put forward by these representatives of the Security Council Pakistan fully exploited these objections to publicise its assumed look of injured innocence in the Anglo-American press.

The first proposal came from the then President of the Security Council, General McNaughten of Canada. His plan was that there should be large scale demilitarisation whereby not Pakistan but also Indian troops should withdraw simultaneously, and the State and Azad Kashmir forces should be disarmed and disbanded. So should the northern areas of Gilgit and Baltistan be demilitarised, but their rebel administration should continue. These proposals were in blatant disregard of the August 13 resolution and were forthwith rejected by India, as they put the Pakistan Army on the same level as the Indian Army and the raider forces on the same level as the State forces. On 14th March 1950, the Security Council authorised the appointment of a U. N. representative to carry on the work of the Commission in implementing the resolution of August 13, 1948.

The first representative was Sir Owen Dixon who paid a three month visit to India in the summer of 1950. His proposals for demilitarisation on the lines suggested by General McNaughten, met with a similar fate. His alternative plan, however, envisaged a partition of the



State. He recommended that regions where there was no doubt about the will of the people, should be allocated either to India or Pakistan, and where there was a doubt, a plebiscite should be held. These proposals were rejected by both India and Pakistan, and Sir Owen then recommended that the time had come for India and Pakistan to agree between themselves as to what should be done.

In April, 1951, the Security Council appointed another representative, Dr. Graham, to bring about the demilitarisation of Kashmir in cooperation with the Governments of India and Pakistan. For two years Dr. Graham toiled patiently to induce India and Pakistan to agree to a plan of demilitarization, but ignoring the basic condition of the August 13, 1948 resolution, insisted on a simultaneous withdrawal of Indian and Pakistan troops. India at one stage agreed, but his negotiations floundered on the quantum of Indian forces remaining in Kashmir after the withdrawal of Pakistan troops.

#### SITUATION ALTERS MATERIALLY

In August, 1953, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met and entered into direct negotiations over the Kashmir situation. They agreed that preliminary measures concerning demilitarisation would have to be taken and when this task was done, a plebiscite administrator would take the necessary steps to secure a fair and impartial plebiscite throughout the State. But hardly was the ink on the Joint Statement dry, when Pakistan press launched a strong campaign against the plan, and thus it could not be implemented. Admiral Nimitz finally resigned in September, 1954, from an office which he had never been able to exercise.

Meanwhile the situation was radically altered when Pakistan agreed to accept military aid from the United States of America. Jawaharlal Nehru in his statement in Parliament on March 1, 1954 declared that "this grant of military aid by the United States to Pakistan creates a grave situation for us in India and for Asia. It adds to our tensions. It makes it much more difficult to solve the problems which have confronted India and Pakistan... There has thus far been no agreement on this issue (demilitarisation in Kashmir). Now the whole issue has to be considered from an entirely different point of view when across the border, across the cease-fire line on the other side, large additional forces are being thrust from outside in Pakistan and put at the disposal of Pakistan. It does make a difference."

The stalemate continued for some years more and Pakistan utilized the time in carrying on an unceasing and vicious propaganda against India which they said was "wriggling" out of holding a plebiscite.

Pakistan they announced was prepared to accept mediation and failing that arbitration to settle the dispute; India was intractable. The clever propaganda succeeded in clouding for the time being the basic issues involved in the Kashmir situation.

But this could not mislead all the people. In December, 1955, Mr. Khrushchev during his visit to Kashmir declared that "the question of Kashmir as one of the States of India has already been decided by the people of Kashmir."

Pakistan continued to violate its obligations under the August 13, 1948 resolution, by carrying on a hate propaganda against Kashmir, by the annexation of Chitral, a feudatory principality of Kashmir, and by numerous attacks on Indian troops and nationals on the cease-fire line.

In the meantime the Kashmir Constituent Assembly which had been busy in framing a Constitution for the State had completed its work and was to be dissolved after the adoption of the Constitution confirming the State's accession to India. The Security Council on the representation of Pakistan called a hurried meeting in Lake Success in January, 1957.

#### MENON'S EXPOSITION OF THE SITUATION

Mr. Krishna Menon, India's representative at the Security Council removed the cobwebs that had gathered round the whole issue and brought back to light the basic resolution of August 13, 1948. The world, thanks to the clever propaganda of Pakistan, had by then come to believe that it was India that was at fault. In his long and masterly speech, spread over nine meetings of the Security Council (23rd January to 21st February, 1957) Mr. Menon expounded the Indian case and showed in glaring light that it was Pakistan which had failed to carry out its obligations and commitments to India and the United Nations.

He pointed out that one of the principles laid down in the resolution was that a material change in the situation having been brought about by the presence of Pakistan army in the State, there should be a withdrawal of troops of Pakistan from the territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It was only when the Commission notified the Government of India that the tribesmen and Pakistan nationals had, and the Pakistan Army was being withdrawn, that India would begin the withdrawal of the bulk of her forces. The resolution has three parts. Part I lays down conditions and procedure for effecting a cease-fire, Part II deals with the procedure of a truce agreement, and Part III lays down the procedure of holding a plebiscite. He showed that it

was "a concertina resolution. Unless (A) is accomplished, (B) cannot be undertaken ; unless (B) is accomplished, (C) cannot be undertaken. Apart from what (C) means—something to which I have referred—(B) has not been implemented, and so unless there is truce, unless there is evacuation, how does the Security Council contemplate the idea of anything in the nature of an assessment of the will of the people in the Pakistan occupied areas, with forty-five battalions of these forces, the entire army of Pakistan, right up on our frontiers ?"

Though the Security Council passed a resolution which was not fair to India, the members being victims of power politics, the world was convinced that it was not India, but Pakistan which by not clearing its aggression on Indian territory, was holding up the solution of the Kashmir question.

In 1960 President Ayub Khan visited New Delhi and had inconclusive talks with Mr. Nehru on Kashmir. Pakistan was, however, in the meantime building up its armed strength and in order to focus world attention on Kashmir, again requested the Security Council to take up in June, 1962, the matter although nothing grave or important had happened to warrant a debate. However, Krishna Menon ably refuted the arguments of Zafrullah Khan who represented Pakistan. Once again Mr. Menon explained India's case and showed that India's original complaint, namely Pakistan's aggression on Indian territory in Kashmir, stood unresolved. He pointed out that conditions on the Indian sub-continent had materially changed since 1947 and the solution of the question was not feasible by holding a plebiscite.

#### PLEBISCITE RULED OUT

Conditions in Kashmir had materially altered since the day the Security Council was seized of the question. During these fifteen years Kashmir, the part of the State that is free, had made alround progress politically, economically and socially. Land reforms were implemented, canals dug, a net-work of roads built. The tourist trade was flourishing. Education was free from the primary to the post-graduate classes. New schools and colleges were opened, dispensaries and hospitals established, refugees rehabilitated and development plans implemented courageously and with enthusiasm.

The conditions prevailing were thus quite different from those in 1947. To have a plebiscite now would amount to throwing all this progress to the wind by creating uncertainty and chaos which might throw open the flood-gates of communal disorder not only in Kashmir but in India and Pakistan.



What the people of the State as well as the people from the rest of India demanded, was the removal of aggression by Pakistan from Indian territory in Kashmir. "But", declared Mr. Menon, "so far as India is concerned, even in order to redress her wrongs, even in order to restore her territories to assert the sovereignty which the Security Council had at no time challenged, and what is more, repeated time after time, she will in no case resort to force. But at the same time, if her territory is violated she will use the provisions of the Charter to defend what is hers under the law and in terms of her possession."

### CHINESE AGGRESSION

Perhaps the most ignoble act of Pakistan during the long years of negotiation, mediation and intervention by the United Nations, was her attempt to blackmail India into surrendering her position on Kashmir. This happened in the fall of 1962 when China launched an unprovoked aggression against India.

By the end of the fifties, thanks to a stable government under the stewardship of Jawaharlal Nehru, India had nearly reached the stage of a self-reliant economy. This was rather unpalatable to China whose development programme was power-oriented, based upon centralized control over the people in contrast to India's democratic methods. Hence the Chinese sought rapid expansion of the country's international, political and military potential.

To realize their expansionist ambitions, the Chinese created an imaginary border dispute with India. This was aimed at securing strategic command of the northern approaches of India and humiliating her in the eyes of the world, and of her neighbours in particular, and reducing her to a state of impotence.

The 'dispute' concerns three sectors. The first is the eastern part of the frontier from Bhutan to Burma known as the McMahon line which was actually delineated at a Tripartite Conference in Simla in 1913-14 between the Governments of India, Tibet and China. The second sector concerns the frontier where Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Punjab come up to the Chinese border. The third known as the western sector concerns Indian boundary in Kashmir with China.

The Indian maps for nearly a century have been showing the traditional international frontier in this sector which follows well defined geographical features and has been defined as follows :

"Between Lanak La (34°24' N and 79°34' E) and Chang La (32°2' N and 79°22' E) in the Ladakh region of the State of

Jammu and Kashmir the international boundary follows the eastern and western watershed of the Chang Chemmo and southern watershed of Chumesang and thence the southern bank of Chumesang and the eastern bank of Changlung Lungpa. Skirting the western extremity of the eastern half of Pangong Tso (called Yaerhmu in Chinese maps) the boundary thence follows the Ang watershed and cutting across Spanggur Tso, follows the north-eastern and northern watershed of the Indus."

The boundary thus includes a large piece of territory known as Aksai Chin projecting out to the north-east. The altitude of this area—over 16,000 feet—and the composition of its soil, together with extremely cold climate, makes it unfit for human habitation. Known as the Soda Plain, the area is desolate where not even a blade of grass grows. But it has considerable strategic value for the Chinese as forming the shortest road link between Tibet and Sinkiang.

Taking undue advantage of the traditional friendship with India, strengthened by the principles of Panchasheel to which both the governments had subscribed, the Chinese without even informing the Government of India constructed a motorable road over this Indian territory in 1956-57 from Yehcheng in Sinkiang to Gartok in Tibet. The only excuse they could give was that they did not come across any Indian patrol and therefore thought that the Indian authority had never been established nor exercised over the area.

The full blast of Chinese propaganda against India began soon after the Tibetan revolt. The persistent theme was that the so-called reactionary circles in India had sparked the Tibetan revolt; the recurrent accusation against the Indian Government was that they had given asylum to the Dalai Lama. Hence they justified a counter-action, quiet and furtive, of the occupation of more than 12,000 sq. miles of Indian territory in Ladakh, and of Long-Ju in the NEFA.

The first incident on the Ladakh border occurred in October, 1958, when the Chinese troops crossed into Indian territory and occupied the Khurnak Fort. That this point was actually in the Kashmir territory was accepted as early as 1924 in a conference of the representatives of Kashmir State of India and the Tibet Region of China. No claim had been ever affirmed that the Fort formed part of the Tibet Region of China. The Indian Government lodged a protest with the Chinese Government at this incursion into Indian territory in July, 1958, and informed them that the Government of India proposed to send a reconnaissance party to the area.

The patrol which was actually sent to the area near Shinglung

could not be traced. The Government of India lodged another protest in October over the construction by Chinese of a motor road across Aksai Chin area. It also made enquiries concerning the missing patrol since the Chinese had now their personnel in this part of Indian territory and might be having information about the missing patrol. The Chinese in their Memorandum of 3rd November, 1958 replied that they had actually put the patrol under detention, but "in the spirit of Sino-Indian friendship" had ordered the military authorities in the area to "deport them from Chinese territory through the Karakoram Pass on 22nd October".

Further incidents occurred throughout 1959. On 20th July, Chinese forces penetrated into Indian territory near the Pangong Lake and took captive an Indian police party engaged in reconnaissance work. They then established themselves at Spanggur (33.34 N and 79.48 E). The Government of India in their Note of July 30, to the Counsellor of China in India protested against this violation of the Indian frontier and demanded the immediate withdrawal of Chinese forces from there.

The most serious incident occurred in October of the same year. An Indian police party, on patrol near the Kong Ka Pass in the Changchenmo Valley in Ladakh had its three members detained by the Chinese frontier guards. A search party was sent out on the following day but was fired on by the Chinese. In this encounter nine Indians were killed and seven captured. Those who were captured were put to severe interrogation for several days and confessions obtained from them under pressure. Finally on Indian protests they were released and returned on November 14.

The Chinese Prime Minister proposed that to avoid further clashes, the Chinese and Indian armed forces should withdraw twenty kilometres from the line up to which both countries had established control, although unarmed police and civil administration should still be allowed to function in the respective areas. Shri Nehru made a counter-suggestion that Indian personnel should be withdrawn to the west of the line which the Chinese Government considered to be the boundary line, as shown on its latest maps, while Chinese personnel should be withdrawn to the east of the boundary line as shown on Indian maps. This arrangement, he pointed out, would leave a considerable space between the forces of the two countries, and being of a mountainous nature would not require any civil or administrative personnel. The Chinese Premier, however, declined to accept the proposal, as it would tantamount to the withdrawal of Chinese personnel from Aksai Chin through which they had built a road.



Finally after much correspondence the two Premiers met in Delhi in April, 1960. The meeting could not produce any agreement between the Premiers concerning the points at issue. It was, however, decided that the historical material should be further studied both in Peking and Delhi by Chinese and Indian officials, and reports made to their respective governments on the results of their research.

After three meetings which the officials of the two countries had in Delhi, Peking and Rangoon, they presented a report to the Chinese and Indian Governments in February, 1961.

The evidence relating to the Western Sector produced by the Indian side showed that at least from the tenth century onwards important points on the present Indian alignment were recognised as the traditional limits of Ladakh on the one side and Tibet on the other. There were a large variety of documents and unofficial maps of different countries including China which established that at least from the sixth century onwards the southern limits of Sinkiang did not lie south of the Kuen Lun ranges and only reached up to these ranges towards the end of the 19th century. This makes it clear that the Aksai Chin Plateau and the Lingzitang plains were never a part of China. There was also documentary evidence establishing that these areas had been utilized by the people of Ladakh and administered by the governments of Ladakh and Kashmir. Police check posts, for instance, had been maintained by the Kashmir Government in the Aksai Chin area as far back as 1865. There were also continued series of revenue and assessment reports covering in detail all the areas now claimed by China. Trade routes running through this area were maintained by the Kashmir Government and in 1870 the British Indian Government signed an agreement with the government of Kashmir securing permission to survey the trade routes in these areas.

A startling fact which came to light during these discussions was that the Chinese side declined to discuss questions pertaining to the boundary of Kashmir State west of the Karakoram pass. This refusal tantamounted to questioning the legality of the accession of the State of Jammu and Kashmir to India. The intentions of the Chinese side with regard to this section became clear when it was announced in May 1962 that Pakistan and China were considering the opening of talks between the two Governments with regard to the delineation of the boundary of Kashmir State west of the Karakoram pass. The Government of India in a Note dated June 30, 1962, said that China had not only departed from its earlier policy of non-interference in the Kashmir dispute, but was giving "legal and moral encouragement to an

aggressor State and prejudicing the prospects of a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir issue between India and Pakistan."

The Chinese aggression assumed sinister proportions on September 8, 1962, when a Chinese force stepped across the established boundary in the eastern sector. Meanwhile they were building up in strength their military potential on the sector with a view to launching a fierce offensive.

On October 20, they launched a treacherous, large scale attack in both NEFA and Ladakh. It was no longer an incursion but a full-fledged invasion.

The Indian forces, ill-clad and ill-equipped were overwhelmed by enemy troops and by heavy artillery, mountain guns and mortars which the Chinese forces had brought with them. They had to yield ground and the Chinese were able to occupy several strategic points both in NEFA and in Ladakh.

The nation rose as one and there were spontaneous demonstrations of national solidarity and determination to face the aggressor with all the resources India could mobilize. World opinion condemned in vehement terms the naked aggression of China against a peace loving nation.

Finally having stretched their lines of communication to a dangerous extent and realising the consequences of a prolonged war with a nation determined to defend its freedom at all costs, the Chinese declared a cease-fire on November 21, 1962 and withdrew to the line they had occupied on September 8. Though there have been no serious clashes between the armed forces of India and China all these years, the aggression continues in as much as China is still in occupation of large slices of Indian territory in both the sectors.

#### ATTEMPT AT BLACKMAIL

While India was fighting back the Chinese aggression and the world was extending all moral and in some cases material support to her effort, Pakistan which for over two years had been making overtures to China to enter into some sort of agreement with her against India, tried now to play a double game. Her Western allies were in a quandary. Pakistan, which they had assiduously built up as a bastion against China, was playing them false due to her ingrained hatred for India. They wanted now to repair the breach and asked Pakistan not to play an active role on the side of China. But Pakistan demanded a price : and the price was Kashmir.

So the Western friends of Pakistan turned to India as usual to accommodate the blackmailer. They believed their 'advice' would now carry weight, seeing how actively they were placing their military equipment and funds at India's disposal in her confrontation with China. Averell Harriman of America and Duncan Sandys of Britain made frantic efforts to bring the two countries around a conference table. They prevailed upon Nehru to sign a joint statement with President Ayub Khan. The statement issued on November 29, 1962, mentioned that the two leaders "have agreed that a renewed effort should be made to resolve the outstanding differences between their two countries on Kashmir and other related matters, so as to enable India and Pakistan to live side by side in peace and friendship."

In pursuance of the statement Sardar Swaran Singh, India's Foreign Minister and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Foreign Minister of Pakistan, representing their respective countries met at Rawalpindi on December 27. Their first round of talks during which they held five meetings, lasted for two days. At the opening session of the Ministerial Conference, Sardar Swaran Singh expressed India's desire for "mutually beneficial cooperation based on friendship between the two countries." The Indian representative suggested to his counter-part, before the discussion began, several proposals for an immediate easing of tension between the two countries. The most important of these was "to embody in a solemn agreement their desire to live side by side in peace and friendship and to resolve all their differences peacefully."

But Pakistan was not interested in developing friendly relations with India. Under the pretence of demarcating the boundary between China and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir, she had been for over two years offering to China the surrender of a large area out of the State territory. On the eve of the Conference, the Governments of China and Pakistan simultaneously announced an "agreement in principle" on the alignment of the border between Sinkiang and the part of Kashmir under Pakistan occupation. The timing of this statement was apparently intended to provoke India to refuse to start the talks the next morning. "But", revealed Jawaharlal Nehru in the Lok Sabha after the failure of the talks, "we decided to continue with them."

Pakistan then created another hitch. "During the first plenary meeting, the Pakistan representative expressed his disinclination to discuss any of the Indo-Pakistan differences other than the Kashmir question." When India agreed to this procedure even, Pakistan insisted to enter into "futile discussions on the old idea of plebiscite." And to sound the death-knell of the talks, Pakistan announced during their course the so-called agreement "under which she gave away as much as



two thousand square miles of our territory to China. This was done on March 2, 1963." It was a hard meal for even Pakistan's Western allies to digest. A bitter criticism was voiced in the Anglo-American press over her attempts at blackmailing India and for her opportunistic foreign policy. In his speech in the Lok Sabha on August 13, 1963, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the inside story of the discussions :

"Whenth. akistan delegation shifted from the futile discussion of plebiscite to the consideration of a possible political settlement, they began to put forward astounding proposals .... Pakistan's objective was obviously not a rational and realistic solution of the problem. They were just out to claim the entire State of Jammu and Kashmir, leaving to India, as it happened in a forgotten moment of generosity, an insignificant area in the extreme south, roughly coinciding with the district of Kathua."

Finally the talks were called off by Mr. Bhutto. However, India made it clear, at the end of the talks, that she had withdrawn all those political concessions in Kashmir which she had offered, for the sake of a settlement, during the course of the ministerial discussions.

#### SECURITY COUNCIL AGAIN

Two years later when Kashmir, along with the rest of India, was making alround progress, Pakistan raked up the Kashmir question in the Security Council again. Her Foreign Minister, Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, complained in January 1964, that India was taking further steps to fully integrate Kashmir with the rest of the country. The unfortunate theft of the Holy Relic from the Hazratbal shrine near Srinagar — which had thrown the people of Kashmir into grief — was termed as a conspiracy to drive out Muslims out of India. Pakistan's application in fact appeared as a "horror story". But, as Mr. Chagla, India's representative, said at the Security Council, "all this is a figment of vivid imagination."

Mr. Chagla's reasoned and forceful speeches on February 5 and 10 in reply to Pakistan Foreign Minister's baseless charges convinced the world of the justice of India's stand on this question. He showed by quoting from the speeches of the Pakistan leaders themselves, that Pakistan wanted Kashmir for her own benefit and not for the good of the Kashmiris. Actually Pakistan coveted Kashmir for its economic and strategic value. To achieve its objective it advanced the theory that it had a bond of kinship with the people of Kashmir. But this bond was not based on common nationality nor a common race ; it was neither based on common traditions nor common history ; it was based merely on a bond of religion. India, however, repudiated the

philosophy of nationality based on religion. And this was the basic difference between India and Pakistan.

At the end of his speech, the representative of India appealed to Pakistan to give up its futile policy of hatred towards India. "Let me implore Pakistan", he said, "to remember that we are most anxious that our two countries, constituting the sub-continent of India, should remain on friendly and cordial terms. The future prosperity and well-being of our two peoples depend on it."

Pakistan's response to this appeal was to vigorously prepare herself for another aggression against India. This we shall study in a later chapter.

## CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

### THE NEW KASHMIR

WHEN ON OCTOBER 26, 1947, the Maharaja appealed to the Governor-General of India, Lord Mountbatten, for military assistance against the invaders, he revealed his intention of forming an interim government in which Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah would be associated with his Prime Minister. This decision of the Maharaja was dictated by the fact that to fight back the invasion successfully it required the whole-hearted cooperation and support of the masses, represented by their political organisation, the National Conference. The ensuing months proved that it was a wise decision.

#### POPULAR GOVERNMENT

For, with his departure to Jammu along with the entire council of ministers, on the night of October 26, the Valley was left without a government and there was thus an apprehension of widespread disorders and consequent chaos seizing the land. It was at this moment of grave crisis that the National Conference stepped in to fill the vacuum. At once the District and Mohala Committees of the Conference took over the functions of local administration and organised companies of volunteers to keep the peace and restore confidence among the people. Soon they had to face another problem, that of refugees pouring into Srinagar from the areas overrun by the raiders. They had to be given shelter and food. The citizens volunteered to take in batches of refugees into their own homes and to feed them till better arrangements were made. The more difficult problem was to keep the masses well informed of the real intention of the raiders—the complete enslavement of the people—and not be misled by their self-assumed title of ‘liberators of Muslim Kashmir’. This became more complicated with the reports reaching the Valley of communal disturbances in Jammu, where the incoming Hindu refugees from outlying districts and West Pakistan had forced the Muslims to emigrate wholesale to Pakistan. Fortunately, the communal peace and amity was not disturbed by these happenings and the masses kept steadfastly on to the path of communal harmony and of raising a united front against the invaders.

To this purpose, a small force of National Militia was raised and



trained. The young recruits fired with patriotic zeal faced the invaders and at several points pushed them back. They naturally had to suffer casualties, but this did not reduce the steady flow of volunteers enrolling themselves in the Militia. After going through a short course of training, they went to the front and fought side by side with their comrades-in-arms from the rest of India.

The winter of 1947-8 was a severe one, and immediately after the raiders were driven out beyond Uri, it snowed heavily, and the road and air communications between the Valley and the rest of India were completely cut. As already noted, Pakistan had enforced an economic blockade of the State during the previous summer and there was an acute shortage of all essentials of life in the Valley. Particularly did the people feel the want of salt which could not be had even for Rs. 10/- a kilogram. Similarly sugar, cloth, kerosene and petrol were non-available. Efforts were made to bring in supplies from over the snow-bound Banihal pass on porters, but it was a fight against Nature. The people with a grim determination bore these hardships and kept their morale high.

With the coming of spring the road link was again established with Jammu. Supplies trickled through with the help of some old and rickety trucks. Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, however, soon got a fleet of new truck chasis from Bombay. The Kashmiri drivers worked day and night to keep the convoys moving with their precious load of the necessities of life lashed on to the hastily constructed platforms on the truck chasis. Thus came into being the Government Transport Department, which can now boast of hundreds of trucks, buses, cars, an efficient and upto-date workshop, and which now handles the major portion of goods and passenger traffic in the State.

The wholesale importers had lost their business contacts following the upheaval in the Punjab, and the imports had to be financed by a cooperative store set up for this purpose.

With the returning normal conditions of life, other problems cropped up. The tourist trade had come to a standstill, the fruit and cottage industries of the Valley suffered due to lack of transport. There was thus widespread unemployment. The Indian Army, however, gave some relief by recruiting a labour force and purchasing suitable local goods essential for the prosecution of the campaign against the raiders. But it was of only a temporary nature. Trade had to be revived. A number of emporia were opened in various cities in India, and trade commissions were set up to enable the exporters and importers of the State to re-establish their business contacts with the trade centres

in India and abroad. In fact these measures proved a boon to the workman, as he could now dispense with the services of the middleman who had been exploiting him so far. This silent revolution in the industrial and commercial set-up of the Valley, naturally gave birth to the industrial and multi-purpose cooperative societies in the State.

Meanwhile the fight against the invaders was going on with relentless vigour. The Emergency Administration rendered all-out assistance to the Army by providing civilian transport vehicles, pack-ponies, porters and labour. It built roads and bridges to enable a faster movement of troops. Accommodation for the army staff headquarters and for the troops on the march was provided in Government and private buildings. Above all, the Administration and the National Conference kept up the morale of the people by their example and precept. The Cultural Front set up under the direct supervision of Kh. G. M. Sadiq, with its dramatic performances, posters and popular songs and ballads was responsible for rousing the masses to a redoubled effort in driving out the raiders from the State.

As 1947 rolled out it was felt both in Kashmir and New Delhi that the "dual administration" of the Prime Minister and the Head of Emergency Administration could not function smoothly and therefore, the Maharaja conceded on March 5, 1948, full responsible government to the people. The Emergency Administration was converted into a regular Council of Ministers with Sheikh Abdullah as the Prime Minister.

#### LAND REFORMS

The people had now every right to expect their popular government to implement the programme of social and agrarian reform as envisaged in the "New Kashmir" Plan. As an immediate relief to the peasants the government enacted laws for the protection of the tenant. They could no longer be ejected from the land. Previously the tenant had to provide seed and agricultural implements and give the landlord fifty per cent of the crop. Now he was allowed to retain two thirds of the production of paddy, pulses and other cash crops.

A moratorium was declared on debts incurred by the peasants and workers and with the institution of Debt Conciliation Courts old debts which were pressing heavily on the peasantry were scaled down by about 80 per cent from 11.1 million to 2.4 million rupees. The peasants could also have reinstated their rights in mortgaged property.

In April, 1949, the government appointed a Land Reforms Committee to prepare a plan for the abolition of big landed estates and transfer of land to the tiller. The total cultivated area in the State was

about 2,200,000 acres, most of which belonged to the Maharaja, his Jagirdars and a class of landlords called Chakdars. The landlords rented the land to the peasants under feudalistic conditions of tenure. They were paid by their tenants partly in kind and partly in cash. Besides, there were Mukararis who received cash payments from the State treasury under various religious and non-religious titles. The latter privileges were abolished forthwith with the exception of some grants to religious endowments.

But before the Land Reforms Committee had prepared and submitted its report, Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah announced drastic and sweeping land reforms in a speech from the National Conference platform. The assent of the Maharaja, the Head of the State, was not obtained and this announcement had to be regularised later by the enactment of a law.

The landlord was allowed to keep not more than 160 *Kanals* (20 acres) of agricultural land, 8 *Kanals* (1 acre) of land for vegetable gardening, 4 *Kanals* ( $\frac{1}{2}$  acre) as residential site and 10 *Kanals* (1.25 acres) of orchards—altogether 182 *Kanals* (22.75 acres). The expropriated land was to be transferred in full ownership to the tenant to the maximum of 160 *Kanals* (20 acres). He had to pay the regular land revenue. All lands which were not under cultivation or not rented and in excess of 182 *Kanals* were transferred to the government for distribution among landless tillers or for collective farming. The question of payment of compensation, if any, was to be decided by the Constituent Assembly to be set up later.

The reform no doubt was aimed at freeing the peasant from the unbearable burden of complete economic dependence on the landlord. In practice, however, it did not fulfil its intended objective, namely allotment of land to landless peasants. Without formulating a regular plan and enacting a law, the leaders announced the outline of the scheme from public platforms to gain minor political advantages. When it became known that the landlords had to surrender their estates above 182 *Kanals*, there was a scramble among the more influential peasants for the would be expropriated land, and the *Patwaris* entered into negotiations with tenants and other villagers on the method of sharing it. Ultimately when the law came into force, it was found that most of the distributable land had already been allotted to non-deserving people. It was found that in many cases a tenant who shared in the distribution of his landlord's extra land was himself the owner of much larger area. The government did not moreover take into consideration the plight of those disabled persons and widows whose only means of livelihood was their land.



In the educational field the government took positive steps towards a revolutionary change in adopting the mother tongue of the boys as the medium of instruction in the primary classes. Multi-purpose schools besides imparting education in arts and sciences, gave instruction and practical lessons in handicrafts. More schools and colleges were opened, notably a women's college in Srinagar. But the most important measure was the setting up of an University in the State.

Education had made rapid progress in the State after 1931 and the number of students appearing in various University examinations was increasing in geometric progression. All the colleges in the State were affiliated to the Punjab University of Lahore. With the partition, the Indian part of the University had to face strenuous times and to set itself up from scratch. It naturally created a great difficulty for the students of the State. The Jammu and Kashmir University thus came into existence on November 1, 1948.

The Central Government extended its helping hand in setting up the University. Apart from financial aid from the Government, it received moral support from top ranking personalities in India. The first Convocation in 1949 was addressed by Jawaharlal Nehru. Dr. Rajendra Prasad and C. Rajagopalachari addressed its Convocation in 1950 and 1951 respectively. The University started on its career as an examining body, but slowly it was transformed into a teaching University. In recent years it has expanded into Arts, Science, Medical and Engineering Faculties and has its own enclave in charming surroundings on the western bank of the Dal Lake.

For providing medical relief to the masses, the government set up some more dispensaries. There was, however, a shortage of physicians and surgeons, and a number of students were given scholarships for studies in medicine at various Universities in India.

#### CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

But all these measures were taken by a government which derived its powers from the Maharaja. Though it enjoyed the support and confidence of the main political organisation in the State, it was felt that the weighty questions which had meanwhile cropped up could not be decided by the National Conference without referring them to the people. In October 1950, therefore, the General Council of the Conference passed a resolution asking for elections to a Constituent Assembly for the purpose of giving to the State a Constitution and simultaneously functioning as its legislature. In May 1951, the Yuvaraj in the capacity of the Regent, issued a proclamation convoking a Constituent Assembly on the basis of free adult franchise. The elections to the

Constituent Assembly were accordingly held and the Assembly met for the first time in October, 1951.

#### CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY ELECTIONS

Foreign correspondents and observers flocked to the State to witness the elections to this important body. The elections were conducted by an Election Commissioner appointed by the Yuvaraj who worked as the Regent of the Maharaja. The constituencies were delimited on the basis of one member to forty thousand people. The franchise was based on universal adult suffrage and people were assured of a free and fair exercise of their vote.

All the 75 seats were won by the National Conference. There were only two contests in Jammu, which were also won by the National Conference. The total number of rejections was 14 and of withdrawals 11.

The Constituent Assembly had primarily been convened for three objects : (1) Framing a Constitution for the State and finalising administrative arrangements with the Centre ; (2) Deciding the future of the ruling family ; and (3) Passing a verdict on the land owners' claim to compensation following the abolition of big landed estates.

#### MONARCHICAL RULE ABOLISHED

Regarding the last two items, the Constituent Assembly had no difficulty in coming to a quick decision. It forestalled the abolition of monarchical system of Government in other princely States in India. With the attainment of independence the institution of Indian Princes was becoming an anachronism and after acceding to the Indian Union, the princes by the force of public opinion, became constitutional heads of their respective States. In 1951, however, they still wielded influence and power and retained some vestige of dynastic rule. In Kashmir, the conditions were different. For twenty years the people had been agitating for a democratic form of administration and monarchy in any form was unacceptable to them. The Constituent Assembly which represented the will of the people, therefore, decided that the Head of the Jammu and Kashmir State, to be called the Sadar-i-Riyasat, be elected by the Legislative Assembly and hold office for a term of five years.

The Assembly was equally emphatic over the non-payment of compensation to land holders affected by the Abolition of Big Landed Estates Act. Since the State was not in a position to pay from its exchequer huge sums of money to landlords in compensation and since they had already got enough returns on capital investment and interest

thereof, the Assembly decided that no compensation need be paid to them. Cases of genuine hardship would, however, receive sympathetic consideration from the Government.

For framing a suitable Constitution the Assembly appointed several sub-committees. But since constitution making was a slow process, it was decided that the Constituent Assembly should convert itself into the Legislature of the State till the new constitution was adopted.

The framing of a constitution for the State brought to light the fissiparous tendencies encouraged by some of the leaders of the National Conference including Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah himself. Originally all the Princely States had acceded to the Indian Union in the three subjects of defence, foreign relations and communications, retaining powers of internal rule in their hands. But with the rapid growth of political consciousness among their subjects, monarchy became anamolous in India and within the short span of three years all the States got merged and became after regional amalgamation, the Constituent States of the Union. Jammu and Kashmir State, however, did not fuse with the Union but retained rights of autonomy, which was recognised by Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

Sheikh Abdullah had thus a free hand to conduct the internal administration of the State. But with the loss of revenue due to the invasion and with a rapid increase in expenditure to finance the numerous development projects, he was depending upon grants and subsidies from the centre. At the same time he was drifting away from the rest of India. This attitude of his was brought about mainly by the chauvinistic outlook of the Hindu of Jammu and provoked by some of the narrow minded and unimaginative beaurocrats in the Central government.

In Jammu the opposition was spearheaded by the Praja Parishad, a party which became vocal from 1949. It advocated the cause of the elements which had been adversely affected by sweeping land reforms and other political and economic changes. In the numerous speeches of Sheikh Abdullah against the Maharaja's rule, the Jammu Dogras came in for sharp denunciation. To add fuel to the fire a few officials whom the government deputed to Jammu did not conduct themselves well. The net result of all this was that the Jammu masses began to get estranged from Kashmiris and it was as a direct result of that that the Praja Parishad gained popular support in Jammu. Deriving inspiration from the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, the Praja Parishad declared its opposition to a separate flag and Constitution for Kashmir because these would encourage fissiparous tendencies by keeping alive a feeling



of separatism. For the future safety and security of Jammu and Kashmir with which the safety and security of India was linked, it thought it essential that the State should be brought fully under the Constitution of India by repealing Article 370 of the Indian Constitution.

A minor incident in connection with the hoisting of the Conference flag in a local college, led to a disturbance in Jammu as a result of which some Parishad leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Subsequently it transpired that these leaders had taken no active part in the demonstrations and through the impolitic intervention of the Indian States Minister, N. Gopalaswami Ayyangar, Sheikh Abdullah released them. But this "interference" provoked the Sheikh to make a speech at Ranbirsinghpura on April 10, 1952 in which he criticized India for communalism and warned against applying the Indian Constitution to Kashmir in all respects.

The speech caused an uproar in the country and the subsequent reactions of the press in India set in motion a vicious circle which assumed sinister proportions at the passing of every day.

In the Valley there was popular resentment against the government due to the inefficient handling of the food problem. Unfortunately the failure of crops in 1949-50 and 1950-51 led to a grave crisis. The Government of India, however, promptly came to the rescue of Kashmir and despatched large quantities of rice and wheat to the Valley. But the distributing agency—the Food Control Department—fell into the hands of some unscrupulous and greedy persons who sold a good portion of the grain into the black market. The food procurement drive added to the misery of the peasants who were forced to part with their stock of grain at nominal rates, while they had to purchase grain at exorbitant prices to pay the *Mujawaza* (land tax in kind). The people's patience was exhausted and when the Food Minister, Mirza Afzal Beg, rose to address a meeting of the National Conference workers he was heckled and made to leave the conference room.

The working of the Co-operative Stores was also giving rise to discontent among the masses. All the essential commodities like cloth, sugar and salt were distributed by these Stores, but according to the findings of a government committee of inquiry appointed in 1952-53, the Co-operatives completely collapsed because of "corruption and malpractices" of their directors and employees.

Sheikh Abdullah and his adviser, Mirza Afzal Beg, in order to regain their hold on the masses of the Valley began to play hot and cold towards India. It was in this background that a session of the Con -

stituent Assembly was held at Jammu in the spring of 1952. It met to consider the reports of three sub-committees set up in the previous session. Mirza Afzal Beg announced that the Basic Principles Committee was of the opinion that the State should form a republic within the Republic of India. The Assembly adopted the principle of abolition of monarchy and of having an elected Head of the State.

#### DELHI AGREEMENT

The Constitutional deadlock thus created was finally sought to be resolved by mutual negotiations between the Central and State Governments. The position of the State in the Union was settled in what is popularly termed as the 'Delhi Agreement' announced on July 24, 1952. India agreed to give a special position and status to Kashmir in the Constitution whereby complete internal autonomy was assured to the State. The hereditary ruler would be replaced by a Head of the State who would be elected for a term of five years. Fundamental rights that are guaranteed by the Indian Constitution were to apply to Kashmir, subject to the provision that they would not encroach upon the programme of land reform. The jurisdiction of the Supreme Court was to be limited, as regards Kashmir, to inter-State disputes, fundamental rights and to matters of defence, foreign affairs and communications. The national flag of India was to be supreme. The emergency powers of the President of India were to apply in Kashmir only "at the request or with the concurrence of the government of the State."

Sheikh Abdullah at once gave effect to the provisions of the agreement with regard to the Head of the State. On November 12, 1952, the Constituent Assembly in Srinagar formally adopted an amendment to the Constitution replacing the Maharaja's rulership by that of an elected "Head of the State," Sadr-i-Riyasat. Two days later the twenty-one-year old Yuvaraj, the Prince-Regent, was elected to the office. His election was formally recognised by the President of India, and incidentally it brought to end the hereditary rule of the Dogra dynasty.

No further action was taken by the State government with regard to other provisions of the agreement particularly the transfer of control of the State telegraphs and telephone department, and the extension of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

The Parishad thus got a handle to launch an agitation. Wholesale arrests were made and in May 1953 the President of the Jana Sangh, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, demonstratively travelled to Jammu where he was arrested and detained in jail in Srinagar. The following month his death there from a heart attack "raised a storm of indignation in India against the regime of Sheikh Abdullah."

Events in Ladakh had taken a turn similar to Jammu. The district, long neglected by the Dogras, was slowly rising from its political slumber. Kushak Bakula, the head Lama, voiced the feelings of the people of Ladakh when he declared that in the event of Kashmir drifting away from India, the Ladakhis would sever their connection with the State and merge with the Indian Union.

These developments, created a psychological crisis in the mind of Sheikh Abdullah. He had already given out his idea of the Valley of Kashmir remaining an independent and neutral State. In formulating this idea he was encouraged by several foreign individuals. "On top of these reports," writes Korbel, "came the highly inflammatory rumours that the United States was backing the idea of Kashmir independence and that Sheikh Abdullah had been encouraged in it when Adlai Stevenson had visited Srinagar in May,"<sup>1</sup> Pandit Nehru, however, declared later that "if there is a modicum of truth in them that is greatly exaggerated...I would say in the course of the last few weeks, in the course of the last few months and some time more, hard cases of this type of interference have come before us—individual interference. It would not be correct to call it governmental interference, but individuals have not behaved properly, because again you must remember the basic fact that Kashmir is a highly strategic area."<sup>2</sup>

#### CHANGE OF GOVERNMENT

The political and economic situation in Kashmir was in the early months of 1953 passing through a severe crisis. The people in general and the National Conference in particular were astounded at the change of attitude of Sheikh Abdullah towards the position of the State in the Indian Union. The majority of the Working Committee members headed by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed were opposed to the attitude adopted by the Sheikh. The whole question was thoroughly discussed in a marathon session of the Working Committee extending to three weeks held in Srinagar in May. Sheikh Abdullah failed to convert the members to his point of view and a resolution endorsing the accession to India and supporting the Delhi Agreement was passed with a majority of fifteen against four votes.

An open rift developed in the Cabinet also. Three of the five members differed on the measures taken by the government in ameliorating the economic condition of the people and the slow implementation of the provisions of the Delhi Agreement.

<sup>1</sup> *Danger in Kashmir*, p. 237.

<sup>2</sup> Speech in the Lok Sabha, September 17, 1952.



The final act was precipitated by the Sheikh's demand for the resignation of a member of his Cabinet, Mr. Sham Lal Saraf, the Development Minister. In his reply, Mr. Saraf refused to resign unless the whole Cabinet was dissolved and a new government formed. Finally on August 7, the three members, led by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, accused Sheikh Abdullah in a memorandum of making arbitrary decisions, of being responsible for deterioration in the administration, despotism, inefficiency and wanton wastage of public resources. The memorandum informed Sheikh Abdullah that the Cabinet had lost the confidence of the people.

A copy of this memorandum was submitted to the Sadr-i-Riyasat, who suggested an emergency meeting of the Cabinet to be held under his Presidentship wherein the differences would be discussed and a solution found to them. Sheikh Abdullah did not accept the suggestion and in the afternoon of August 8, left on a weekend holiday for Gulmarg.

Meanwhile the Sadr-i-Riyasat faced with a grave threat to the unity, prosperity and stability of the State, by a serious rift in the Cabinet, acted promptly, no doubt at the instance and with the support of the Central Government, and issued an order on August 8, 1953 dismissing Sheikh Abdullah from the Prime Ministership of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, and dissolving the Council of Ministers headed by him. On August 9, he invited Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed to form a new government whose "continuance in office will depend upon its securing a vote of confidence from the Legislative Assembly during its coming session."

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed accepted the invitation and was sworn in on the same day as Prime Minister.

On August 9, Sheikh Abdullah along with some of his confidants was arrested at Gulmarg and kept in detention at Udhampur in the Jammu Province.

The new Prime Minister immediately upon taking the oath of office broadcast his policy statement. He said that it had been a painful decision for them to part from their erstwhile colleagues, but in times of historic crisis when the fate of millions was at stake, personal relations and affections had to be subordinated to the paramount interests of the country. He narrated the course of events which led to the parting of the ways between them. "Recent developments have made it abundantly clear to all of us that a betrayal of the country's interests and the traditions of our democratic struggle was in the offing, which would inevitably have led to grave consequences. None of us could afford to watch complacently the repetition of the events which uprooted the

lives of millions of people in the Indian sub-continent in 1947." The slogan of 'independence' was highly misleading and there "should be no doubt as to the motive for sponsoring such an idea in the context of international developments in Asia and other parts of the world."

"An 'independent' Kashmir," continued Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, "under the influence of an imperialist power will be a grave threat to freedom and independence of Indian and Pakistani people. In view of the geographical position of the State, such independence is bound to involve us in a bitter and violent international controversy and another Korea may be staged here as a result of the armed conflict between interested powers."

He then gave an objective survey of the State's accession to India which gave a position of security and honourable status to a small State like Kashmir "with its poor resources, backward economy and complex geographical situation." He declared that "the secular and democratic traditions and ideology of our national movement have established indissoluble links with the democratic movement in India." He then mentioned that the key to the crisis lay in the deep-rooted economic discontent of the masses of the State. During the preceding five years "serious shortcomings in the handling of the economy of our State have led to some violent dislocations in a number of trades and professions resulting in unemployment and under-employment, economic maladjustments and a heavy fall in the living standard of the people."

He then announced some ameliorative measures to ease the economic distress. The *Mujawaza* levee was abolished forthwith ; the price of paddy reduced by Rs. 2/- per *Kharwar* (about 80 kilograms) ; the Co-operatives were to be reorganised and the government would allow reopening of competitive retail shops ; co-operative debts would be stayed in cases of genuine distress. His policy would be to provide employment to villagers throughout the year, by developing cottage industries and a Planning Commission would be appointed to devise ways and means for raising the productivity of the State.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed announced the abolition of educational fees in schools and colleges from the primary to the post graduate classes. "Every effort," he stated, "will be made to develop our regional language particularly Kashmiri, Dogri and Ladakhi." He announced that the State Emporia would be reorganised and cheap credit made available to handicraftsmen. Better amenities would be provided for tourists and the permit system would be abolished.

BAKSHI GHULAM MOHAMMED

Born in 1907, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, the new Prime Minister,

started his career as a school teacher and was later employed by the All-India Spinners Association. Here he had an opportunity of coming in contact with some of the close associates of Mahatma Gandhi, and having a thorough understanding of the Swadeshi Movement. He entered politics in the early twenties when he was arrested for taking part in the movement boycotting foreign goods. In 1931 he threw himself whole-heartedly into the national struggle and had to suffer in the repression which followed. It was due to his organising abilities that the National Conference developed into a well-knit, extensive and wide-spread organisation in the State. During the 1946 'Quit Kashmir' movement he went to India to work for and direct the movement from there. He mobilized opinion in the country in support of the movement and when finally Kak had to go, he returned to Kashmir in triumph.

When the Pakistan inspired invasion took place, Bakshi rose to the occasion and by his untiring efforts organised a people's resistance against the raiders. By his wise handling of the situation following the Maharaja's departure for Jammu, he prevented panic spreading among the people and the way he kept the whole Valley under control is a tribute to his popularity and his genius for organisation.

In the first popular government formed by Sheikh Mohammed Abdullah, Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed occupied the position of Deputy-Prime Ministership. His entire attention was devoted to the organisation of the Militia, the Transport Department and the development of cottage and other industries.

Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed gained immense popularity as Deputy Prime Minister with his easy accessibility. A man of the people, Bakshi was known for his rugged common sense and quick decision.

As was to be expected there were outbursts of anger among the people in the Valley following Sheikh Abdullah's arrest. But very soon the situation came under control and with the quick realisation of the pernicious implications of the 'independent Valley' idea by the general mass of the people, life returned to normal throughout the State. In fact in September a convention of the workers and representatives of the National Conference from all the local committees in the State was held in Srinagar, which gave an overwhelming vote of confidence to the Bakshi government and approved the action taken by him with regard to Sheikh Abdullah and his personal followers.

In Pakistan there were demonstrations of anger against the Government of India for having, they alleged, managed to put Sheikh Abdullah behind the bars. How the Sheikh turned for them from a



Quisling to a patriot was difficult to say. The Prime Minister of Pakistan at once rushed to New Delhi and had a conference with Pandit Nehru, after which a joint communique was issued, affirming the settlement of the Kashmir situation by holding a plebiscite after the preliminary steps for preparing the ground were taken by a committee of officials from both the countries. As has been mentioned above, the whole scheme was sabotaged by the Pakistan press who raised a storm of vituperation against India and its leaders as soon as the joint communique was published.

#### ACCESSION TO INDIA CONFIRMED

When the Constituent Assembly met in Jammu in February, 1954, it passed a unanimous vote of confidence in Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed and his Cabinet. On February 6, the Constituent Assembly confirmed the State's accession to India. The reports of the Basic Principles Committee and the Committee on Fundamental Rights were also adopted the same day. The Basic Principles Committee report stated that "in order to enable the Centre to discharge its responsibilities, which devolve upon it under the Constitution, those provisions of the Constitution of India which may be necessary for this purpose should be made applicable to the State in an appropriate manner. While preserving the autonomy of the State, all obligations which flow from the act of accession and also its elaborations as contained in the Delhi Agreement should find appropriate place in the Constitution."

As a practical consequence of the report, the customs barrier was removed on April 13, and thereby Kashmir became economically an integral part of India. The Centre compensated the loss of revenue to the State by a subsidy amounting to twenty million rupees a year.

On May 14, 1954, a Presidential Order was issued incorporating the recommendations of the State Constituent Assembly in the Indian Constitution.

The Drafting Committee presented the draft of the new Constitution to the Assembly on October 10, 1956. It was unanimously adopted on November 17, 1956 and came formally into effect on January 26, 1957, the seventh birthday of the Republic of India.

In regard to all basic matters, the State Constitution is identical with the Indian Constitution. It provides for a parliamentary form of government, a legislature, adult suffrage, an independent judiciary, a Public Service Commission, and other democratic institutions. In the matter of Fundamental Rights, the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court and the authority of the Comptroller and Auditor-Gen-

ral of India, the State is like any other in the Union. The State's official language is Urdu which is one of the recognised Indian languages in the Constitution. The Directive Principles of the State Policy are also modelled after those of the Constitution of India. The State is to establish and preserve a socialistic order of society. The Constitution has a firm secular basis.

Later various measures taken to consolidate the State's ties with the rest of the country. The State entered into financial arrangements with the Union Government in 1957 which brought it on par with other States in respect of financial matters including proportionate allocation of funds from the Centre.

A State cadre of I.A.S and I.P.S. officers has been created and these officers are trained through the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

The State's participation in the Northern Zonal Council has widened the area of co-operation with other States in the Zone leading to greater exchange of experience, technical knowhow and pooling of administrative and other resources in various fields of development.

The Accounts and Audit Department of the State is now under the Auditor-General of India whose nominee runs the Department in the State and accounts of revenue and expenditure are subjected to audit and scrutiny of the Auditor-General.

In 1959 the State Assembly unanimously decided to seek amendment of the State's Constitution to provide for the extension of the jurisdiction of the Election Commission of India and the Supreme Court over the State of Jammu and Kashmir. The recommendations of the State Legislature have been incorporated in the Indian Constitution through a Presidential Order issued on January 26, 1960.

The permit system which put restrictions on the entry of Indian nationals into the State was finally abolished on April 1, 1959.

The Legislative Assembly passed an Act authorising the Government to permit those non-State subjects to purchase land and other immovable property in Jammu and Kashmir who intend to set up industries in the State.

The Constituent Assembly passed in the capacity of the Provisional Legislature, the People's Representation Act providing for delimitation of Constituencies for the purpose of election to the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council. It also made provision for free and fair conduct of the elections. In pursuance of this Act, the Sadr-i-Riyasat issued an order on February 11, 1957 for the Delimitation of Constituencies. The total number of Constituencies in the State

is 75, out of which there are 30 in Jammu Province and 45 in Kashmir Province including Ladakh and Kargil.

#### ELECTIONS AND AFTER

Elections to the new Legislature were held in March, 1957, and once again the National Conference candidates swept the polls winning 68 out of 75 seats. The Praja Parishad won 5, Harijan Mandal 1 and Independents 1.

The second elections to the State Assembly were held in 1962 along with the General Elections in India, under the control and the supervision of the Election Commissioner. During the previous five years of the Bakshi government there had been an all round progress in the State and it was but natural that the electorate should return the nominees of the National Conference to the Legislature. Out of 75 seats the the National Conference secured 70.

#### ALL ROUND PROGRESS

During a decade of Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed's dynamic Chief Ministership, the State made phenomenal progress on the economic and social fronts. An expenditure of eleven crore rupees was incurred on the implementation of the First Five Year Plan (1951-56). In the Second Plan period the State spent over 26 crores. The Third Plan had an outlay of rupees seventy-five crores.

In agriculture, food production increased considerably. The installed capacity of power which was only about 4,000 kw before the implementation of the Plans increased to over 24,000 kw. Side by side with the development of cottage industries, new factories sprang up. The labour force increased from 6,000 in 1952 to 10,000 in 1961. The per capita income which was Rs. 188 in 1950-51 went up to Rs. 237 in 1958-59. In the field of social services, the State government achieved notable success. There was now an engineering college, a medical college, two agricultural colleges, two polytechnics, and a host of such institutions. Similarly in health services the State had sixteen hospitals as against six in 1951-52. The number of dispensaries increased by three times the number a decade ago. A network of roads connected out-of-the-way towns and villages and opened new markets for their produce. The tourist traffic increased five times, thanks to the numerous facilities offered to the tourists in the shape of tourist huts, hotels, cheap transport and other amenities. Some heavy industries were established, particularly the cement factory at Wuyan, 12 miles to the south-east of Srinagar. Industrialists from the rest of India became increasingly interested in exploring the possibili-



ties of setting up factories in the State in view of the availability of extensive raw materials.

While the people of the State were struggling to come out of the trough of age-old ignorance and want, Pakistani agents and saboteurs were surreptitiously establishing contacts with the disgruntled elements in the State. The vigilant eye of Bakshi, however, prevented them from coming out into the open to play their nefarious game.

#### BAKSHI QUILTS

Unfortunately Bakshi decided to lay down the reins of government in pursuance of what is known as Kamaraj Plan. Jawaharlal Nehru had, after the Chinese aggression, come to the conclusion that the masses in India had not yet become conscious of their rights and obligations and it was, therefore, imperative to involve the youth in this national task. He thought that it was now time for elder statesmen and leaders to make room for the younger generation.

Accordingly several top-ranking Congressmen offered to step down and Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed, an ardent admirer of Nehru, was one of the first to accept the Plan. He offered his resignation which was reluctantly accepted by Nehru in August 1963. There was at once a scramble for power among the many aspirants from the National Conference. Ultimately a lesser known man, Mr. Shams-ud-din was elected to succeed Bakshi as a compromise measure.

This was the opportunity which the pro-Pakistan elements, backed by infiltrators and secret agents, were waiting for. Having failed to enlist the support and sympathy of the Muslim masses to rise in revolt against the State government, they resorted to a mean strategem to fan up communal passions on a mass scale.

#### THEFT AND RESTORATION OF THE HOLY RELIC

On December 27, 1963, the Holy Relic enshrined at the Hazratbal mosque was stolen after breaking open the special room where it was lodged. The news of the disappearance of the Holy Relic spread like wild fire and caused widespread dismay and anger among the people. That it was a pre-planned conspiracy is apparent from the fact that within minutes of the occurrence, thousands of black flags were thrust into the hands of the people who came out *en masse* into the streets and open spaces of Srinagar in defiance of the inclement weather and the rigours of biting cold and frost. Knowing well the deep veneration in which the Holy Relic was held by the Kashmiri Muslims from generations, the conspirators believed that their wrath at its disappearance

would be directed against the government as well as against the Hindu community. But as usual the people, though grieved deeply, maintained communal amity and prayed for the recovery of the sacred Relic by holding mass congregations all over the Valley.

The Government of India took up the investigation of the theft and after strenuous efforts were about to track down the conspirators when the latter stealthily restored the Holy Relic to its place at the Hazratbal mosque. This was on January 4, 1964. There were widespread rejoicings all over the Valley. The State and Central governments heaved a sigh of relief.

#### SADIQ COMES TO POWER

The event had, however, revealed the shortcomings of the Shams-ud-din ministry. With the active help and advice of the Central government, the National Conference legislators elected Mr. G. M. Sadiq as their leader who assumed the office of Chief Minister in February, 1964.

With every change in government, the State in one way or the other came, or was induced to come, nearer to the Centre. The latest was the change in the designation of the head of the State as Governor. He was now to be appointed by the President and not elected by the State legislature as previously. But with the gradual erosion of Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which guaranteed the autonomy of the State, there was no corresponding response from the Centre. Except for the confirmment of a deputy-ministership on an M. P. from Kashmir in 1967, the State has not been given any representation in the Central Cabinet. No wonder it continues to remain a backward State in the Indian Union.

Mr. Sadiq who had played a prominent role in the freedom struggle under the leadership of Sheikh Abdullah and later held ministerial posts in his and Bakshi's governments, began his administration with the announcement of the liberalization and normalization of government policy towards all elements in the State's body-politic. This, coupled with his weak and wavering administration, gave an opportunity to various elements inimical to India to create trouble. Large-scale student demonstrations were held in Srinagar and it was seized upon by Pakistan to bring again the Kashmir question before the Security Council in order to malign India at the world forum.

Another important decision Mr. Sadiq took was the withdrawal of all charges of conspiracy against Sheikh Abdullah and others. The Sheikh had been under detention from August 1953 to April 1964 with

a brief spell of freedom from January to April in 1958. To keep him indefinitely under detention without trial went against the letter and spirit of the Indian Constitution. The Government of India was assured by the minions of the Intelligence Bureau that a case could be framed against the Sheikh for conspiring to overthrow the State government by violent means. The government was taken in and the case was launched against Sheikh Abdullah and others in 1958.

The case lingered on for six years and yet the end was not in sight. From most of the documents produced at the trial by the prosecution and the wild statements of some of its witnesses, it was apparent that the case was a fabricated one. It smacked of the numerous conspiracy trials staged by the British during their rule in India and public opinion hence would not favour a prolonged political trial of this nature. Sensing the general feeling in Kashmir and in the rest of the country, Mr. Sadiq took the initiative and ordered the immediate release of the Sheikh.

The Sheikh was released in April 1964 and received a tumultuous welcome in the Valley. He was invited by Jawaharlal Nehru to Delhi and was cordially received by him. Later he visited Pakistan where he saw for himself the miserable conditions under which the people in so-called "Azad Kashmir" passed their days. He cut short his tour and dashed back to New Delhi to attend the funeral of Jawaharlal Nehru who passed away on May 27, 1964.

Nehru's death was believed by the military junta which ruled Pakistan to be the forerunner of the dismemberment of India into linguistic and other zones. Their war preparations assumed sinister proportions. In Kashmir particularly they intensified their subversive activities which culminated in the wholesale infiltration of armed bands in August 1965. This resulted in the 22-day Indo-Pakistan war which will be dealt with in detail in a later chapter.

The after-effects of the war and the internal bickerings in the Sadiq ministry slowed down considerably the tempo of progress in the State. Hence during the June 1967 Middle East war between Israel and UAR, there were widespread riots in Srinagar and a church was burnt down by the angry mob.

#### KASHMIRI PANDITS' AGITATION

Not only was the Muslim element dissatisfied with the slow pace of economic progress, the Hindus of Kashmir popularly known as Kashmiri Pandits, who had been discriminated against all these years in the matter of recruitment to government service, admission of their



children to technical and vocational schools and colleges and in various other fields, were resentful of the State government and to a great extent of the Central government too, who, they believed, were condoning these acts of discrimination against them.

Their pent-up resentment was provoked into a massive agitation in September 1967 by what is known as Parmeshwari conversion case. A young Kashmiri Pandit girl named Parmeshwari, working in a co-operative store, was alleged to have been induced by a Muslim colleague to marry him after conversion to Islam. The Pandit community was infuriated at the way the police handled the case and held a meeting of protest. At once the Pakistani agents worked up feelings among the Muslims and a few communal clashes took place in which some lives were lost.

There was a spontaneous outburst of anger and resentment in the Pandit community, normally sober, peace-loving and docile. That they rose as one to offer *Satyagraha* shows their deep resentment of the way they had been treated for quite some time by the State government. They abstained from attending their offices, schools, banking establishments and shops. They resumed work only when the representatives of the State and Central Governments assured them that their grievances would be sympathetically looked into and redressed.

This small community has rendered valuable services to the State all through its long history. Being pioneers in education and other fine arts, they passed on the torch of learning to other communities and made them fit to take up the duties normally performed by them. Many of their youth have come out of the State to work in the rest of the country and even abroad and here also they are making a mark.

Differences among the members of the council of ministers came to a head with the resignation of Syed Mir Qasim and some of his colleagues. Meanwhile the Indian National Congress originally activated in Kashmir by Mr. Mohammad Shafi Qureshi and his young band of nationalist workers, was rapidly replacing the National Conference. The two organisations had fundamentally identical aims and objects. Syed Mir Qasim as president of the Congress party in the State was responsible in establishing it firmly among the masses. Later Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed too advised the National Conference to officially merge with the Congress which gave further strength to the party.

While this transformation of the main political party was in progress, Mr. Sadiq breathed his last on December 12, 1971. He had been ailing for quite some time and his death at a time when the country was in the midst of a war with Pakistan was widely mourned.

## SYED MIR QASIM

Syed Mir Qasim who had rejoined the Sadiq ministry was called upon to assume office as Chief Minister of the State. He immediately rose to the occasion and applied his energies to the successful prosecution of the war.

Syed Mir Qasim (b. 1921) comes from an ancient family of Doru in the south of Kashmir valley. Educated in Srinagar, he took an active part in the student movement and was arrested during the 'Quit Kashmir' agitation in 1946. He held cabinet posts in Bakshi Ghulam Mohammed's and in Mr. Sadiq's ministries. He is known for his dynamism, intelligence and broad outlook on social and political problems. On his assumption of office as Chief Minister, he enunciated the outlines of his programme for economic and social progress of the State.

The fourth elections to the State legislature held in March 1972, returned the Congress party to power. Almost all the political parties in Kashmir took part in these elections. Of the 74 seats, the Congress won 57, the Jamait Islami 5, the Jana Sangh 3 and Independents 9.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### THE TWO WARS WITH PAKISTAN

THE REFUSAL by India to subscribe to the theory that religion can be the sole basis of nationality, brought forth in Pakistan a reaction in the form of a deep-seated hatred towards India. The common thread running through the policies followed by the several Prime Ministers, Foreign Ministers, Presidents and Martial Law Administrators of Pakistan since its inception, has been hostility towards India. It found expression in their oft-repeated cry for *Jehad* or holy war. It explains the shifting home and foreign policies followed by Pakistan since its birth and it is the basic reason for her wholesale preparations for an all-out war against India. Whereas the Indian leaders made the banishment of hunger and want from their country the guiding policy of their government, the Pakistan rulers followed a comparatively easy course of creating a war psychosis among their people.

In furtherance of their set policy they embarked upon the ruinous course of arming Pakistan to the teeth. To get an edge on the armed forces of India, they secured weapons of the latest type by entering into military alliances with various countries in complete disregard of the best interests of their people or the people of the Indian sub-continent.

#### PAKISTAN'S MILITARY ALLIANCES

Their foreign policy was governed by the same animus. They aligned themselves with contending power blocs, often discarding one for the other to suit their anti-India policy. They did not hesitate even to allow foreign military and air bases being set up in Pakistan or in the Indian territory under their occupation in Kashmir.

In her search for allies, Pakistan was helped by the new alignments sought to be formed by the Western bloc for their 'cold war' strategy. One of these 'alliances' was the South East Asia Collective Defence Treaty (SEATO) which came into being on September 8, 1954. Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, the U.K. and the U.S.A. signed at Manila a pact of 'continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid' which established a collective defence system in South-East Asia.



Pakistan's membership of the SEATO brought the cold war to the doorsteps of India, thus disturbing the area of peace which she wanted to build in Asia. It went counter to Nehru's abhorrence of military alignments and his neutralism born of a deep conviction that a race for armaments was most likely to result in a third war.

Her next move was to attempt to form a bloc on the basis of anti-communism. This was the beginning of the notorious Baghdad Pact of 1955. Later on it came to be known as CENTO. Bilateral defence agreements between the U.S.A. and Turkey, Iran and Pakistan were signed in Ankara on March 5, 1959.

#### U.S. ARMS AID

Along with the military pacts with the Western powers, Pakistan endeavoured to secure from the U.S. as much military aid as it possibly could to bring its armed potential on par with India and even more. The first indication of such an aid being given by the U.S.A. came in November, 1953 when Mr. Ghulam Mohammed, the then Pakistan Governor-General was in America for 'urgent medical treatment'. General Ayub Khan, who was then the commander-in-chief of the Pakistan army, had been in Washington a few days earlier. On February 25, 1954 President Eisenhower announced that the United States Government would comply with Pakistan's request for arms aid. But at the same time he assured India that "this step does not in any way affect the friendship we feel for India..."

Nehru strongly criticised U.S. military aid to Pakistan and described it as a form of intervention in Indo-Pakistan relations. He was assured by high-ranking U.S. officials that the arms supplied to Pakistan would under no circumstances be used against India.

Pakistan on the contrary had a different opinion. In October, 1956, for instance, the then Pakistan Foreign Minister, Sir Feroz Khan Noon, said that "enmity of a powerful neighbouring country had obliged Pakistan to enter into defence alliances to preserve her freedom." At last, the fears of India came true. President Ayub Khan declared in January 1962, that Pakistan would use all the weapons in her possession against India in case she was attacked and would not want to take advice from her allies.

The motivation of Pakistan in entering into military alliances with Western powers had little to do with anti-communism and everything with India. A convincing proof of this was the declaration by their new-found friend—Premier Chou En-lai. In a press statement in 1963 he said that Pakistan had assured him in 1954 that she had joined the

Western Military Alliances only to gain political and military ascendancy over India and that "Pakistan had no other motivation in joining the pacts." A practical demonstration of it was given when, throwing to the wind all undertakings and commitments under the various Pacts, Pakistan began to woo the very power against whom the aid had been secured—China. Pakistani leaders following the age-old saying 'your enemy's enemy is your friend', suddenly developed warm feelings of friendship for China when the latter country was posing a threat to India's security. Their growing ties with China culminated in an illegal agreement on Kashmir's northern border, whereby Pakistan gave away to China a part of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir State which was under Pakistan's occupation.

#### A FORMIDABLE MILITARY MACHINE

In 1958 Pakistan came under the military dictatorship of the former Commander-in-Chief, General Ayub Khan. By 1964 America's 1.5 billion dollar worth of military hardware supplied to Pakistan enabled her forces to bear superior fire-power and sophisticated armour both on the ground and in the air. For, Pakistan's military rulers had seen to it that the fighting equipment they secured from the Western powers was of the latest type. To match the massive arms supplies, Pakistan expanded her armed forces to gigantic proportions considering her size and resources. More than three-fourths of her annual budget was spent on her armed forces.

According to one reliable estimate she had an armed force of 253,000 which cost it 269 million dollars annually. Para-military forces were estimated to be of a total strength of 65,000. Over and above this was the light-armed Militia whose strength could be over 200,000.

The Pakistan Air Force had four squadrons of Sabre-jets and four squadrons of B-57B Canberras. In addition, it had one squadron of F-104G Starfighters and another was being formed. Besides these it had RT-33As for tactical reconnaissance and some T-33 and T-37B jet trainers. It had also a transport force of C-130B Hercules. In all there were 280 aircraft manned by a force of 17,000 to 20,000 men.

The Pakistan Navy had a total strength of 8,250 personnel, with a light cruiser for training cadets, five destroyers, two frigates, eight mine-sweepers, and ten other ships. There was also a coastguard force of 1,500 men. Besides, the Pakistan Navy had recently acquired a submarine for training purposes.

To match this ultra-modern land and air force equipment, Pakistan air-bases were built on the latest plans with sophisticated

radar screens and underground hangars and other necessary installations. The runways were built of reinforced concrete to make them shell-proof. As if this was not enough, Pakistan had built complicated defence lines all over its borders with India. Besides the Ichhogil canal, which served as the outer defence line of Lahore against an armoured thrust, and was fitted with concrete pill-boxes, the defences included hidden dug-outs, underground fortresses and communication tunnels. Nearly all able-bodied men and, in some cases, even women on the borders were given training in rifle shooting, throwing hand-grenades and operating radio transmitters and other signal equipment.

And to reinforce this formidable war machine, Pakistan had given intensive training to underground and guerilla forces for subversion and sabotage across the cease-fire line in Kashmir and the international border with India.

#### ATTACK ON KUTCH

Having perfected her war machine to the last detail and secured assurances for an all-out support from China, Pakistan embarked upon the final adventure. There were several factors which she considered to be in her favour.

With the passing away of Jawaharlal Nehru in May 1964, the world in general and Pakistan and her allies in particular, had expected dismemberment of the Indian Union into various racial and communal groups. They were confident that at least in the case of Kashmir, the new Government in India would yield ground. Nehru, they thought, had refused to hand over Kashmir on a silver platter to Pakistan because of his personal attachment to the State. President Ayub had expressed several times the opinion that Kashmir was of no value to India, and it was only their false prestige which prevented the Indian leaders to give it up. Sheikh Abdullah's release and his recent anti-India statements in the Middle East countries and in London, they thought, were a pointer to how India proposed to deal with this vexed question now.

Then there was the acute shortage of food and foreign exchange plaguing India. To add to the worries and difficulties of the Union Government, there had cropped up the serious language controversy. The fissiparous tendencies had convinced the rulers of Pakistan that the time was ripe for a final blow to complete the process of disintegration in India.

And finally they struck at the time and on the ground of their choice. The time was the spring of 1965 and the ground the Rann of Kutch in Gujarat. In the early hours of April 9, the Indian border



post of Sardar in Kutch was attacked with heavy mortar and medium machine-gun fire. This was followed by artillery fire from 25-pounder guns under cover of which two battalions of the Pakistan regular army advanced towards the post. Thereupon India took defensive action and the Chief of the Army Staff was instructed to take over operational control of the border and the army units moved into Vigokot the same evening. Indian units reoccupied the Sardar Post on April 10 after throwing back the Pakistan army battalions.

Pakistan concentrated further armed forces on the border behind its troops inside Indian territory. On the morning of April 24 she launched an attack with heavy artillery in brigade strength on our post west of Chhad Bet. On April 26, her armed forces, again with tanks and armoured vehicles, attacked our border post at Biar Bet. These attacks continued for a number of days.

Pakistan justified these attacks, in the Chinese fashion, as measures to regain control of her border in this sector which she alleged had been violated by Indian forces. But these attacks for creating an imaginary border dispute were in fact just a probing action to test India's will to resist and the reaction of her Western allies with regard to the use of the military equipment supplied to her under various Pacts.

Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri sounded a note of warning to the nation and declared that "our neighbours, both China and Pakistan, had chosen to adopt an attitude of aggressive hostility towards India. They seem to have joined hands to act in concert against us."

But India had a living and vital stake in peace because "we want to concentrate attention on improving the living standards of millions of our people. In the utilization of our limited resources, we have always given primacy to plans and projects for economic development."

Negotiations for a peaceful settlement were carried on with the good offices of the British Prime Minister, Mr. Wilson. In the meantime Shastri and Ayub Khan met informally in London on the occasion of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers Conference on June 17, 1965. Prolonged negotiations resulted in a tentative accord on the broad principles of an immediate cease-fire and of the Kutch border demarcation by negotiation. Finally an agreement was signed between the two governments on June 30 for an immediate cease-fire and restoration of *status quo ante* in the area of the Gujarat-Pakistan border. The agreement provided plans for "determination and demarcation of the border in that area after the *status quo ante* had been restored."

But even before the proverbial ink was dry on the agreement, Pakistan was planning a more dangerous and massive aggression in Kashmir.

### THE 22-DAY WAR OF 1965

Borrowing the technique of guerrilla warfare perfected by her new-found friend, Mao Tse-tung, Pakistan "put the fish in the water to test the temperature". On August 5, 1965, several thousand fully armed Pakistan soldiers in civilian clothes slipped across the 470-mile-long cease-fire line into Jammu and Kashmir. They came, in twos and threes, through the many gaps and trails that criss-cross the mountainous terrain. Dense woods, ravines and gorges provided the infiltrators excellent cover.

Having crossed the cease-fire line surreptitiously, the infiltrators met at appointed places to re-group themselves into larger parties. They carried a variety of weapons, cooked food, dry rations, medical supplies, transistor radios and Indian currency notes. They were equipped with arms and ammunition supplied by the Pakistan Government. They were organised into eight "Forces" each composed of six companies of 110 men. In most cases the companies were commanded by regular Pakistan Army officers of the rank of Major while the platoon commanders were either junior commissioned officers or senior non-commissioned officers.

The tasks allotted to the infiltrators were : destruction of bridges ; disruption of lines of communication ; raiding of Indian army convoys, headquarters, supply dumps, police stations and important installations ; inflicting casualties on troops, civilian officials and VIPs. The raiders banked on getting local support, failing which they were instructed to terrorise the local population by setting fire to their houses and property.

### KASHMIR ANSWERS PAKISTAN

The people of Jammu and Kashmir, however, saw through the game early. They gave the lie to the lurid accounts of "popular uprising" put out by the Pakistan radio and press, by cooperating with the authorities and giving valuable information which helped the security forces to trace and round up the infiltrators. In some cases the villagers captured the infiltrators themselves and handed them over to the police.

It must have been a great disappointment for Pakistan indeed. For, they had worked all these years to sow seeds of disaffection among the people of the State and day in and day out invoked religion to wean

them away from opposition to the so-called two nation theory. The days of August were full of instances of close cooperation between the army and the people of Kashmir in locating the raiders and taking them into custody. Thanks to their efforts, the infiltrators were on the run after only a few days. In their rage they indulged in acts of loot and arson to sustain themselves.

While the people were busy tracking down and mopping up the infiltrators, India's armed contingents had fanned out to guard important points of entry into the country. Wherever necessary, they had taken positions on strategic points commanding the infiltrators' lines of communication and reinforcement.

Almost within a week of their crossing the cease-fire line, the first 3,000 to 5,000 infiltrators were liquidated by the Indian security forces with the cooperation of the local people. Some were killed and wounded, some taken prisoner and the rest had to flee to ravines and jungles where they passed their helpless days without food and shelter. Ultimately they found their way back across the cease-fire line through unfrequented paths. But in their first rush and before the security forces could be alerted, several groups of infiltrators had sneaked into the interior of the Valley and had even reached the suburbs of Srinagar. Earlier, another group penetrated 42 miles into the Valley and reached the Badgam town where finding the people's attitude hostile to them, they set fire to two high schools. Another group infiltrating from the Tithwal sector reached Kupwara some 40 miles inside of the cease-fire line in the north of the Valley.

But the people of Kashmir, undaunted by the atrocities committed against them by the infiltrators, presented an impregnable front of communal harmony and held the Pakistani invaders at bay. The infiltrators became desperate and were hunted men rather than guerrillas. Far from finding a place in the homes and hearts of the local people as they had counted upon doing, they had to take cover in forests and ravines from where they were ferreted out.

But the operation was still continued by Pakistan. A fresh wave of guerrillas was sent across the cease-fire line under cover of artillery fire from Pakistan posts. All over the 470-mile-long cease-fire line, they succeeded in eluding the security forces and indulging in acts of sabotage and arson in the Valley. Their bases of supply and infiltration were at strategic points located on the Pakistan side of the cease-fire line.

The Government of India approached the U.N. Observer Group to prevent these incursions by the Pakistani armed personnel in civilian



clothes. But they were helpless. As the U. N. Secretary General reported to the Security Council (September 4) he had been unable "to obtain any assurance from Pakistan that the cease-fire agreement and the cease-fire line in Kashmir would be respected henceforth or that efforts would be exerted to restore conditions to normal along the line."

#### INDIA TAKES ACTION

The Indian army had, under these circumstances, no other choice left except to take action to plug the entry routes used by Pakistani raiders for infiltrating into the Jammu and Kashmir State. On August 24, the Indian forces crossed the cease-fire line in the Tithwal sector and occupied the Pir Sahiba post, 9,000 feet high. It was over this sector that the infiltrators entered the Valley in strength and fanned out to Kupwara and Guraish. By September 13, the Indian forces were in control of the strategic Muzaffarabad-Kel road, the supply line to the infiltrators operating from the Gilgit sector.

Another crossing, this time in the Uri sector, was made on August 26. It was a dare-devil operation conducted by a young officer, Major Ranjit Singh Dayal and his hundred men. The operation was quick, efficient and successful. Within two days they captured one after another the strategic posts of Sankh, Burjipathri, Kuthnar-ki-gali and finally the 13,200-foot high Bedore, nine miles south-east of Uri. The objective was Haji Pir pass, the strategic gateway to the 200-square mile "bulge" in the cease-fire line. Despite heavy odds they reached a bund near the Haji Pir pass on the morning of 28th. Leaving some men behind to keep the enemy engaged, Dayal climbed another hill feature and from there rolled down and stormed the enemy position at the pass. The Pakistanis fled in confusion, leaving their guns behind. By half past ten the Indian security forces were in complete control of the pass.

The capture of the Haji Pir pass was only a prelude to the operations to link up Uri and Poonch. The linking up was completed on September 10, 1965. In these operations the Indian forces had to clear more than thirty posts of the Pakistanis. It was a success which they could be proud of.

Pakistan had now discovered to her bitter cost and humiliation that Kashmir was not "ripe for revolution",—that the vast majority of people had openly dissociated themselves from the new Pakistan conspiracy and were fully cooperating with the Indian army and police in rounding up the infiltrators. There were now only two alternatives

before the rulers of Pakistan to follow. Either they had to completely write off the guerrillas and admit the failure of the operation, or to commit their country to an all-out war with India. As was to be expected from a military dictatorship, they chose the latter course.

#### A MASSIVE ASSAULT

On September 1, 1965, Pakistan launched a carefully planned offensive at a strategically sensitive point across the border in the Chhamb sector of Jammu. The attack began with a thunderous artillery barrage to soften up the Indian defence at Burejal near the village of Chhamb. As the sun rose a little higher in the horizon, the massive attack developed. Over the arid plains came a hundred tanks, and in the dust cloud behind the lumbering steel fortresses followed a full brigade of Pakistani infantrymen. The offensive was launched across the international border and over the cease-fire line in an arc running north to the village of Dewa.

In the face of this massive attack, the Indian troops fell back in a series of planned withdrawals to hold defensive positions behind Chhamb and along the shallow Munawwar-Tawi. By evening the advance of Pakistani armoured drive to Akhnoor had been temporarily halted.

Pakistan had chosen a favourable and a very crucial point for its major attack on India. Situated at the trijunction of the cease-fire line and the international border between Pakistan and India in Jammu, Chhamb commands a strategic position. The country around is flat and suitable for deployment of tanks. On the other hand, India had only a strip of plain land to defend, with hills in the background where deployment of armour was not only of doubtful utility but hazardous too.

#### THE SINISTER DESIGNS

As the Pakistani initiative developed, their objective became clearer. It was not only to seize Akhnoor and its vital bridge over the Chenab, but to envelop Jammu city as well. Akhnoor would have given them the control over the line of communication of the Indian armed forces in the Naushera-Rajauri-Poonch sector and the capture of Jammu, possibly through a strike from Sialkot, the control of the life-line from Pathankot, the railhead, to Kashmir valley and Ladakh. Pathankot was probably to be the target of another thrust from Pasrur-Narowal over the Dera Baba Nanak bridge across the Ravi, smashing Gurdaspur on the way. Thus the control of the vital road link between Kashmir and the rest of India was to be wrested from

India. This would isolate her troops in the State along the cease-fire line with Pakistan as well as those guarding the Sino-Indian border in Ladakh. The aim was the destruction of a sizeable section of the Indian army, and with that accomplished, to humiliate India and challenge her security. The shock of such a military disaster would break the Indian will to resist and Kashmir would fall like a ripe plum into Pakistan's mouth.

To win a quick decision, Pakistan increased the tempo of the offensive. On September 3, their Pattons began a fresh advance and their aircraft heavily bombed Jaurian. The Indian planes, however, worsted them both in the air battles and in their effective cover to their land forces. There was a renewed attack on the morning of September 4. They crossed the shallow Munawwar-Tawi. Indians were forced to take up positions on the high ground this side of the river. From there they inflicted heavy losses on the enemy, and regrouped quickly for a counter-attack.

The counter-attack developed on the morning of September 5, east of Jaurian, with supporting air cover. The enemy were driven back across the Munawwar Tawi.

There was a widespread resentment throughout India at the latest aggression committed by Pakistan. The Indian people rose as one man with a will to resist and meet the Pakistan challenge. This was the first disappointment for Pakistan rulers who had banked upon an immediate disruption of the Indian Union.

The story of the defence of the Chammb-Jaurian area can be written in letters of gold. Realising that this was a question of India's survival as a nation, the men and officers of the Indian army and air-force threw themselves into the battle with epic daring. But their daring and sacrifice could not overcome the overwhelmingly adverse factors of terrain and Pakistan's superior armour. Many perished, and every moment the threat to India grew more menacing. The pressure needed to be slackened and for this Indian army command had to wrest the initiative from Pakistan as quickly as possible.

#### THE INDIAN REBUFF

So at dawn on September 6, Indian army units crossed the Punjab border in the Lahore sector. The Indian air force simultaneously made tactical strikes against a number of military targets.

The attack was mounted in three prongs and spread over a 30-mile front; along the Grand Trunk Road from Wagah to Dograi, on the Khalra-Burki axis; and along the Khemkaran-Kasur axis. Further



north, units of the Indian army flung the Pakistanis over the Ravi across Dera Baba Nanak bridge. The bridge was blown up by the enemy the following day, thus putting an end to any serious threat of a Pakistani drive in the reverse direction.

By the very first evening, leading elements of the Indian forces reached and even crossed the Ichhogil canal but were unable to consolidate these bridgeheads in the face of fierce counter-attacks. But India had already achieved its prime objective. Enemy pressure on Akhnoor was immediately relieved and Pakistan promptly disengaged the bulk of its remaining armour in this sector and pulled it back to Sialkot-Pasrur awaiting the development of the Indian initiative.

On September 7, units of the Indian forces crossed the Jammu-Pakistan border over a broad front from Suchetgarh to Ikhmal some 30 miles further east. The object was to pin down Pakistan's IV Corps, including the 6th Armoured Division, draw it into battle and prevent the enemy from launching an offensive on Jammu city in her diversionary tactics.

The battle in this sector began with a bang. The amount of armour and heavy artillery that Pakistan brought into action showed how strongly they were poised for attack. They put American Pattons and Chaffes in the counter-attack to halt our advancing columns but our jawans set many of them in flames.

On September 8, Indian forces made a diversionary attack across the Rajasthan-Sind border at Gadra in order to hold down the Pakistani Division located in the Karachi-Hyderabad region. The aim was to prevent this Division from either moving north to the main battle area or initiating any independent action.

#### DECISIVE BATTLES

While these actions were in progress in the wings and a ding-dong struggle continued in the Lahore theatre, two major battles were building up in Kasur and Jammu-Sialkot. The withdrawal by Indian forces in the Kasur sector was purely tactical. They took up new positions in a horse-shoe at the head of a fork at Khemkaran hinging on the village of Asal Uttar, four miles beyond this little town. Apparently the Pakistanis misread the Indian move. They thought that the time was ripe for them to counter-attack and rushed headlong into what had now become a trap. Five armoured attacks were launched one after the other between September 9 and 10. The Indian armour, lying concealed in tall fields of ripening cane and bajra, was waiting for the kill to step into the trap. As soon as they did, the Indians cut a

nullah, thus bogging the land to the enemy's left flank who had now little freedom of manoeuvre. It was a field day for the Indians who got the prestige kill of the General Officer Commanding the Division and the Artillery Commander. It was a victory won by superior tactics, gunnery and training against a larger and better equipped armoured force. Pakistan lost 97 tanks, a large number of them Pattons, of which 15 were captured intact and two surrendered with crew. Two Lt. Colonels, 6 Majors and 6 other officers and several other ranks were taken prisoner.

A worse fate awaited Pakistan's more recently formed Sixth Armoured Division in the Sialkot theatre. Action was joined on September 8. The Indian armour moved forwards towards Phillora, south-east of Sialkot. Units of the Pakistan's Sixth Armoured Division moved up from Badian, Pasrur and Phillora to counter-attack and thus was fought a series of tank battles, the biggest since the second World War, and sustained without break over a period of 15 days.

The battle of Phillora was fought on September 11. Skilfully deployed and mutually supporting Indian tank columns executed a flanking movement that separated the enemy armour from his infantry by a manoeuvre, cut his armour into separate segments, forced his tanks to close in and then annihilated them piecemeal with tactical superiority and super gunnery. As many as 66 enemy tanks were destroyed on that day for a loss of only six, a notable victory that will find a very high place in the annals of armoured warfare. Having smashed the Pakistani armour, the Indian infantry units stormed through the Pakistani defences to take the town. The cease-fire on September 23 saw the Indian forces holding a salient of some 180 sq. miles, only 4,000 yards from Sialkot at one end and upto and including Alhar railway station near Chawinda at the other. In Phillora sector they had forced up to Kalowali towards Chawinda, but were robbed of their prize by the cease-fire.

The capture of Burki by the Indian forces was a feat of bravery and tactical superiority over the better equipped Pakistanis. The march to Burki took less than 22 hours. The Indian troops risked their lives in engaging the enemy gunners from very close quarters, while several other crept stealthily from the flanks and threw grenades inside the pill-boxes causing instantaneous death to all the gunners there. The process was repeated and ultimately all the miniature steel and concrete fortresses fell and were captured. The loss of Burki and before it of the post of Hudiara was a telling blow to the enemy. Our forces had thus made a big salient several miles deep into Pakistan and were almost overlooking the suburbs of Lahore.

The 22-day fighting between India and Pakistan was actually the finest hour of the Indian air force. The trail of glory which it left in the sky began with the very first aerial combat on September 3, when a force of IAF fighters was ordered to intercept the bigger and faster Starfighters and Sabres attacking the Indian forces. The war in the air was fought at various levels: ground attack and support, strategic bombing of enemy airfields, radar stations and other vital installations, disruption of enemy communications and supplies, air defence of Indian skies and aerial reconnaissance. By the time the hostilities ceased, the IAF had definitely established India's air superiority. Pakistan started the war with 104 F-86 Sabre jets, 12 F-104 and 24 B-57 bombers and lost more than half the total number of these aircraft.

At a time when the heroic officers and men of India's Armed Forces were engaged over the Indo-Pak borders, nothing was more reassuring than the high morale of the people behind the lines. Standing firmly behind the men of the Armed Forces throughout the three weeks of fighting was a nation, united and determined. The Armed Forces themselves were a mirror of the rich mosaic of India's secular democracy which was fighting the battle against medievalism, bigotry and war mongering. Out of this baptism of fire the ancient Indian nation emerged with a new lustre.

#### THE CEASE-FIRE AND AFTER

In its resolutions of September 4 and 6, when the Security Council was roused to activity, it charged the U.N. Secretary-General with the responsibility of bringing about a cease-fire between India and Pakistan. U Thant, the Secretary-General, undertook a tour of the Indian sub-continent and met the leaders of Pakistan and India separately at Rawalpindi and New Delhi. The Pakistan authorities, however, far from responding in a positive manner to U Thant's efforts, sought to utilize his visit to attain the objectives which they had failed to achieve by force of arms. For eighteen years Pakistan had, through a combination of diplomatic intrigue and military action, endeavoured to reopen the question of the status of Kashmir and challenge India's sovereignty over the State in the name of the principle of self-determination. So far all its efforts including the assault by its armoured columns in Chhamb had failed. Now it sought to exploit the world's concern for peace for the same end by laying down its three objectives as pre-conditions for a cease-fire. It asked for withdrawal of all forces including those of India from the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir and induction of foreign troops in the State as a U.N. peace-keeping force to be followed by a plebiscite within three months. As Prime



Minister Shastri said, not one of these conditions was acceptable to India.

Meanwhile the course of the war was going against Pakistan. She was desperate. President Ayub Khan hence sent a pathetic appeal to President Johnson to intervene personally in the dispute with India. But the latter's reply was that the United States would "fully support the efforts of the Secretary-General to bring peace between the great nations of India and Pakistan."

U Thant was continuing his efforts for a cease-fire. A series of meetings of the Security Council were held from September 17 to 20. Ultimately the Council passed a resolution on September 20, demanding a cease-fire with effect from 0700 hours GMT on September 22, 1965. It called upon both the Governments to issue orders for a cease-fire at that moment and a subsequent withdrawal of all armed personnel back to the positions held by them before August 5, 1965.

On receiving the Security Council resolution, Government of India sent a communication to the Secretary-General informing him that they would be prepared to issue orders for a simple cease-fire effective from the appointed time and date provided Pakistan agreed to do likewise. But Pakistan would not immediately accept the proposal. As Prime Minister Shastri said, "they wanted the cease-fire, indeed they needed it, but, as is their practice, they wanted to put up a show of resistance till the very last moment." A few hours later, Pakistan's Foreign Minister announced at a specially convened meeting of the Security Council that his country had also accepted the resolution of the Council. Hence the cease-fire came into effect from 3-30 A.M. IST on September 23, 1965.

On that day India was in occupation of nearly 740 sq. miles of Pakistan territory while Pakistan held only 210 sq. miles of Indian territory. Indian troops were 8 to 10 miles deep inside Pakistan in the Lahore area, while in the Sialkot area they had consolidated their position about 15 miles deep. In Rajasthan area, they were about 30 miles inside Pakistan from Gadra on the border.

Pakistan's war machinery had been virtually crippled. They had lost heavily in tanks, aircraft and other military equipment. India's main objectives were thus achieved. These were to prevent the annexation of Kashmir by force ; to give notice to Rawalpindi and the world that if Kashmir was important for Pakistan, it was no less important for India ; to show that India was not a flabby giant and that if pushed too far it could and would strike hard.

But Pakistan had not yet reconciled itself to maintaining a permanent peace on the sub-continent. She showed scant respect for the

cease-fire and had been seeking to rehabilitate its military losses by continued infiltration, encroachment and open seizure of large tracts of Indian territory. Simultaneously she launched a vigorous drive to regain diplomatic initiative at Lake Success and other foreign capitals. Her plan was to raise political issues, particularly Kashmir, along with the cease-fire and troop withdrawals. This was firmly resisted by India.

Outside the United Nations there were forces working for a peaceful settlement of the India-Pakistan conflict. Immediately after Pakistan's massive assault on India in Chhamb, the Soviet Union took active steps to prevent escalation of the war. On September 4, the USSR Premier, A.N. Kosygin expressed his concern over the fighting both to Prime Minister Shastri and President Ayub Khan. The Soviet Union, he said, "would not be frank if we did not say that a military conflict in Kashmir is a matter of concern to the Soviet Government because, apart from other things, it is a development in a region which directly borders on the Soviet Union." He put forward certain considerations for the settlement of the conflict. These included an immediate cease-fire and withdrawal of forces of the respective countries to positions behind the cease-fire line.

On September 11, the Soviet Prime Minister renewed his offer of good offices and pointed out his country's special interest in the situation in Kashmir which, he said, "lay directly on the Russian frontiers". Pakistan's reaction to Mr. Kosygin's offer of good offices and a summit meeting between Mr. Shastri and President Ayub Khan on Soviet soil was, however, lukewarm. She, it appeared, was banking upon support from and intervention on her behalf by her friends in the Security Council. But when the Council did not oblige her, she turned to the Russian offer. Mr. Bhutto undertook a visit to Moscow on November 23 and accepted Mr. Kosygin's proposal. But he laid down certain preconditions, particularly the reopening of the Kashmir question. India made it clear that while accepting the good offices of Mr. Kosygin, she would not take part in a meeting where the talk was going to be held to discuss Kashmir. But if it was suggested that India should have some talks on the total relationship between India and Pakistan—that India and Pakistan should live as good neighbours—Mr. Shastri would not like to say no to it. Mr. Bhutto was thus convinced that India could not be browbeaten. On November 25 he told newsmen in Moscow that President Ayub would be prepared to discuss with Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri the whole gamut of India-Pakistan relations at a summit meeting anywhere on Soviet soil.

## TASHKENT DECLARATION

The summit meeting was held at Tashkent on January 4, 1966. Premier Kosygin was helpful throughout the seven days that the meeting lasted in bringing about a successful conclusion of the talks over a varied number of subjects on which there existed conflicts and differences between the two countries. When almost a deadlock had been reached on January 9, he held long meetings with both the statesmen which resulted in the Tashkent Declaration of January 10, 1966.

According to the Declaration the two leaders of India and Pakistan announced their firm resolve to restore normal and peaceful relations between the two countries and to promote understanding and friendly relations between their peoples. They considered the attainment of these objectives of vital importance for the welfare of the 600 million people of India and Pakistan. They further agreed to exert all efforts to create good neighbourly relations between India and Pakistan in accordance with the United Nations Charter and reaffirmed their obligations under the Charter not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means.

The two leaders agreed to withdraw by February 25, 1966 all armed personnel of the two countries to the positions they held prior to August 5, 1965. Further, they announced that the relations between the two countries shall be based on the principle of non-interference in the internal affairs of the other. To further cement the relations between the two neighbouring countries, they agreed to discourage any propaganda directed against the other country and to consider measures towards the restoration of economic and trade relations, communications as well as cultural exchanges between India and Pakistan. Another important article related to the setting up of joint committees to suggest further steps to be taken by the two governments to bring the peoples of the two countries nearer to one another.

The ink on the historic Declaration was hardly dry when the joy at the successful conclusion of the summit meeting, turned into sudden grief. Within a few hours of the signing of the Declaration, Mr. Lal Bahadur Shastri passed away at Tashkent from a heart attack. The news of his sudden death plunged India into grief. It was a tragedy for the people of India who were left orphaned at a time when they needed him most.

It was hoped by the peace-loving citizens of the world that the spirit of Tashkent would now govern the relations between India and Pakistan. An era of friendship, cooperation and cordiality was envisaged to begin between the two countries. Lal Bahadur Shastri's



supreme sacrifice—he worked himself to death during the negotiations at Tashkent—was believed to have further sanctified the historic Declaration.

But these pious hopes were belied immediately after the troop withdrawals to the August 5, 1965 positions were completed. There was an immediate outcry in Pakistan against some of the articles of the Declaration. Pakistan's anger and frustration compelled President Ayub Khan to back out from honouring the various provisions of the agreement. He refused even to open trade with India. Meanwhile hostile propaganda against India was resumed with full vigour by Pakistan press and radio.

As days passed, there developed a vehement opposition to the rule of President Ayub Khan. But instead of handing over the reins of office to popular leaders, he quietly passed over the control of Pakistan to a military junta led by the army chief, General Yahya Khan.

The military junta's first concern was to repair and rebuild their damaged war machine. Apart from their Western friends, they received substantial quantities of military hardware from China. The embargo on arms supplies to India and Pakistan placed by America and Britain during the 1965 conflict, was circumvented by surreptitious imports through some of Pakistan's allies in CENTO. By 1971 Pakistan had built up a formidable war machine and the military junta were confident they could avenge their defeat suffered at the hands of India in 1965.

So, for the fourth time since Independence, Pakistan hurled her armed forces against India in December 1971.

### THE 14-DAY WAR OF 1971

The immediate cause was the explosive situation in what was then called East Pakistan. The military junta had let loose there a reign of terror to suppress the popular uprising against them. For over 24 years the people there had been exploited by West Pakistan rulers, and when a year earlier the Awami League led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman scored a landslide victory in the first ever General Elections held in Pakistan, the military junta got a shock at the prospect of losing their hold on Bangla Desh.

Hence on March 25, 1971, the Pakistan army swooped down on the people of Bangla Desh with tanks, artillery and aerial bombing, spreading death, destruction and devastation. About one million people were killed in the blood bath that followed. To escape the butchery, some ten million people fled to India in the biggest ever migration in

history. This avalanche of human beings imposed a heavy strain on India's economic and social structure and threatened her security. Indian leaders tried to rouse the world conscience and appealed to world's leaders to intervene so that the refugees returned to their homes with security and honour. But all their appeals went unheeded.

Meanwhile the uprising spearheaded by the Mukti Bahini or freedom fighters, assumed formidable proportions. India's sympathy for the suffering refugees and the Mukti Bahini, provoked Pakistan to start border skirmishes which gathered momentum as days passed. When the military junta found that it would not be long for the Mukti Bahini to inflict crippling blows on the occupation forces, they turned their attention to India. On December 3, 1971, Pakistan launched a pre-emptive strike on twelve of our airfields and formally declared war on India.

In her broadcast to the nation, the Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said that the "war on Bangla Desh has become a war on India" and warned the people to be prepared for a long period of hardship and sacrifice.

Fortunately India's armed forces backed by a nation, united and firm, dealt a quick and decisive blow to the aggressor and brought him to his knees. After only a fortnight of fighting, Pakistani forces in Bangla Desh surrendered unconditionally to the G.O.C-in-C. of the Indian and Bangla Desh forces in Eastern Theatre. Having achieved the objective, namely, the liberation of Bangla Desh, India declared a unilateral cease-fire from the evening of December 17, 1971.

#### A LIGHTNING CAMPAIGN

Yahya Khan's action in starting a war with India had three objectives in view : to tie down our security forces in the west, so that we may not be able to move some of them to reinforce the eastern sector, if required ; to provoke us to commit our reserves in the west to a premature offensive on to the well-prepared and formidable defences in the Punjab sector ; and thirdly to internationalise the problem of Bangla Desh and invoke the good offices of the U.N. and other big powers to bring about a cease-fire before the Mukti Bahini gained complete control of Bangla Desh.

But as things developed, he did not succeed in any of his objectives. Our forces in the west played mainly a defensive role ; our reserves on the western front were not committed ; and the U.N. was powerless to do anything. On the contrary, India gained the support of those

elements of the world population who had been horrified at the atrocities committed by Pakistani occupation forces in Bangla Desh.

The regular campaign for the liberation of Bangla Desh lasted hardly twelve days. This short and sharp campaign across a vast expanse of land, criss-crossed with rivers and rivulets, inhabited by nearly 75 million people and held down by over 93,000 regular and para-military forces of West Pakistan, will rank in the annals of military history as a remarkable feat.

Geographically, Bangla Desh is such that it offers a well-equipped defender ideal opportunities to hold positions along river lines and turn the marshes and paddy fields of the region into death traps for the advancing troops. To further impede a quick advance, bridges and ferries over the waterways had been systematically destroyed by the occupation forces as they fell back on Dacca. Also, in the earlier phase of the liberation struggle, road and rail bridges and culverts throughout the country had been blown up by the Mukti Bahini. Taking all these factors into consideration the quick converging move on Dacca, the capital and the headquarters of the occupation forces, was a brilliant feat indeed.

The thrust on Dacca developed from three directions. Our troops crossed into Bangla Desh on December 4, and making contact with the Mukti Bahini, advanced with infantry, artillery and armour from Hilli towards Bogra ; Boyra towards Jessore and Agartala towards Akhaura. Simultaneously, additional columns of troops entered Bangla Desh from different points, the main objective being to isolate and fragment the Pakistani garrisons and to prevent them from functioning as a cohesive force under a single central command in Bangla Desh.

Our air force, after a series of grim battles, secured mastery of the air within 24 hours. Our naval forces attacked installations and other important targets on the coast as well as deep inside river estuaries. The ground forces taking full advantage of the gallant support provided by air and naval arms, wisely bypassed enemy strong points and endeavoured to converge on Dacca. The speed of our flanking movements and the determination with which they were pressed, rendered the long prepared positions of the enemy untenable. Pockets of the enemy left behind were dealt with by follow-up echelons.

It was a quick dash to Dacca. Town after town fell before our advancing columns. Kamalpur was liberated the first day. Akhaura and Laksham followed the next day. Sylhet and Comilla met the same fate. With the fall of these important towns, the resistance began to crumble. The troops which captured Akhaura immediately began their



march on Dacca. In western Bangla Desh, the Jessore and Rangpur-Dinajpur sector could not hold out in the face of the lightning advance of our troops. The morale of the enemy sagged further with the sinking of two of their destroyers off Karachi and also of several gunboats. Our aircraft-carrier *Vikrant* with supporting ships and submarines immobilised the port facilities at Chittagong and the Khulna-Chalna-Mongla complex, and damaged airfields and military installations on the southern periphery. Amphibian landings were carried out at Cox's Bazar to seal off a possible escape route to Burma.

By December 9, Pakistani troops in Bangla Desh were completely surrounded. They were shaken and demoralised and were running hastily into Dacca in great confusion. Most of their columns had lost contact with one another. By the evening of December 12, our army had ringed round Dacca and was preparing itself for the final assault on the capital. For quick and effective river crossings, parachute and airborne troops in sufficient strength were deployed so as to bring the operations in the eastern theatre to a quick and successful conclusion. Their employment at this stage of operations underlines the coordination and careful and able planning that characterised all operations in the 14-day war.

The airborne operations were synchronised with other ground operations and the activities of the Mukti Bahini who were already engaged in heavy fighting in the area. The detached groups of the Bahini as well as our ground troops soon linked up with the airborne troops. Their tasks, among other things, were to take over important tactical features within the Dacca complex, such as air landing grounds and river crossings with the twin objectives of enabling the induction of our main force and preventing the egress of the units of the enemy.

By December 14, the Indian forces advancing from the west were ferried across the river Meghna near Bhairab Bazar. Their leading elements reached Narsingdi, some miles beyond. The advance from the north passed Tangail where paratroopers were dropped to help local guerrilla forces capture the town, and reached Jayadevpur, 18 kilometres from Dacca. The two other columns which reached the vicinity of Dacca were from west to Chandpur, and one from the Jessore-Khulna direction which reached Faridpur.

So it was not surprising that by the evening of December 14, a part of the Dacca garrison surrendered and the Pakistani administration collapsed. Next day realizing the hopelessness of the situation, the G.O.C-in-C of the occupation forces, General A.A.K. Niazi asked for a cease-fire and on the 16th he surrendered unconditionally to our

and Bangla Desh command in the eastern theatre. The long suffering people of Bangla Desh were able to breathe the fresh air of freedom and liberty. In the words of Mrs. Gandhi, "Dacca was now the free capital of a free country."

#### ACTION ON THE WESTERN FRONT

When in the afternoon of December 3, 1971, Yahya Khan started the war with a pre-emptive air strike on twelve of our airfields in the western theatre, his main objective was to cripple as much of our air-force as possible. Once this was achieved, he would gain an overwhelming advantage in the land war that would follow. For, Pakistan's military junta firmly believed that the fate of Bangla Desh would be decided on the plains of Delhi. According to them Dacca might fall but so would Delhi and this would give them a strong bargaining counter.

With this aim in view, Pakistan had been hatching a plot to strike without warning. There had been numerous violations of Indian air space ; Pakistan aircraft had flown over the Srinagar airfield on more than one occasion, and the border between Kashmir and Rajasthan had also received their attention.

The border areas of West Pakistan facing the Indian territory of Punjab and Jammu had also been the scene of much activity. The villages were evacuated and regular troops had taken over the posts normally held by border guards. There were reports that the area facing the Punjab and Sialkot sector had been heavily reinforced, and that bunkers, mine-fields and strong points were set up. Foreigners entering India by land from Lahore talked about large bodies of troops, guns and armour moving down the main roads towards Lahore, and of the war hysteria that had been built up in Pakistan.

But to Pakistan's dismay the blitzkrieg on our airports did not produce the expected results. Not only was the pre-emptive strike ineffective, but our air-force and ground defences took a heavy toll of the enemy aircraft. For an attempt to destroy our radar station in Amritsar, the Pakistan radar station at Badin in the Rann of Kutch was attacked. Then came our attacks on the Pakistan air bases at Sargodha, Murid, Shorkot, Risalwala, Mianwali, Masroor near Karachi and Chanderi. Indian air crews reported good results at all the targets. In the air, the total tally of Pakistan planes downed was 19, nine of them on the ground at Masroor airport near Karachi.

This seems to have opened the eyes of the self-deceived Pakistan High Command, for their cherished ground thrust towards Amritsar,

Jammu and other prestigious objectives did not come off. Instead they mounted repeated assaults on our positions in Chhamb, Sulemanki and Hussainiwala sectors where they encountered stiff resistance from our defence forces. It was, however, on Chhamb that Pakistan laid high stakes.

Chhamb was very prominent in the 1965 War. It was in this sector that the Pakistanis launched a massive armour-cum-infantry attack with the object of capturing Akhnoor, and segregating Kashmir from Jammu. The massive attack this time was obviously designed to attain the objective which eluded them in 1965.

The attack on Chhamb on the morning of December 4, began with a heavy artillery barrage. It developed into a massive assault on Deva Mandela by two Pakistan infantry brigades supported by a tank regiment. The attack was repulsed with heavy casualties. Next day the enemy launched another attack, this time using two infantry divisions and three regiments of armour, and by evening had captured the feature.

Our forces regrouped at once and next day the Pakistanis were thrown back with the loss of their 33 tanks. Indian forces were again on the west bank of the shallow Munawwar Tawi. In the following days, Pakistanis attempted to recross the river on more than three occasions but were beaten back. General Tikka Khan, who personally directed the operations, launched five fierce attacks during the course of the first week of fighting in a vain bid to effect a breakthrough to Akhnoor, but each time his attack was blunted and his troops ejected from the east bank of the Munawwar Tawi. By December 11, the enemy realized the futility of pounding his head on the solid wall of our defences and gave up further offensive action. The only gain they could claim with all their efforts and heavy losses, was a narrow strip of land on the west bank of the Munawwar Tawi.

Another sector where Pakistan attempted to get a foothold was the Uri-Poonch sector. Pakistan has always looked upon Poonch as a prestigious objective but Indian defenders stood like a rock and all the enemy attacks were beaten back with heavy losses to their men and material.

Though India's strategy in the western theatre was mainly defensive while the campaign in Bangla Desh was in progress, our forces were not absolutely static. A two-pronged attack was launched into Sind from the Rajasthan sector on December 5. Our forces advanced to 40 kilometres west of Gadra Road. The advance was rapid considering the nature of the terrain, and by the evening of December 7, a



number of towns and villages were captured in the Sind and Barmer sectors. By the 10th, Naya Chhor opposite Barmer, was contacted; the entire Nagarparkar bulge in the Gugwat sector was in our hands. Pakistan replied with a thrust in the Jaisalmer sector which was repulsed by a devastating blow at Longewala delivered mainly by our air-force. The railway line from Gadra Road was linked up further with the rail track connecting Naya Chhor and Mirpur Khas. In the Bikaner sector several villages were taken by us and in the Kutch sector the entire Chhad Bet region was cleared.

In Kashmir our forces cleared over 50 enemy posts in Kargil, Gurais and Uri. In the Tithwal sector a substantial portion of the Lipa valley came into our hands. Some commanding heights across the old cease-fire line were taken by us in the Poonch-Naushera-Rajauri sector. The whole of the Akhnoor Dagger salient and a number of border posts in the Jammu sector, came to our hands. We crossed the Basantar river and the greater part of the Shakargarh-Zafarwal salient was taken by us after fierce tank battles.

In Punjab the Dera Baba Nanak enclave, south of the Ravi, was occupied by us. Several border posts in the Dera Baba Nanak-Ajnala-Amritsar-Khem Karan-Ferozepur-Mamdot and Fazilka sectors were captured. In all over 5,000 sq. miles of Pakistan territory was in our hands at the time of the cease-fire.

#### SUPREMACY OF IAF

A notable feature of the 14-day war both in the eastern and western theatres was the close coordination between our ground, air and naval forces. While our army was dealing heavy blows on the enemy on land, the Indian air-force was active striking, without interruption, by day and by night at enemy aircraft on the ground, at airfield installations, runways and radar stations. Troop concentrations were broken up and armoured columns were scattered. Important installations of military value were severely damaged and the transportation system was disrupted. In addition, the IAF provided air cover to our ground forces and cooperated with them in destroying the enemy tanks. Our air defence units took a heavy toll of the enemy's intruding aircraft.

In Bangla Desh the Indian air-force achieved mastery of the vast airspace within the first twenty-four hours by completely annihilating the Pakistan air-force. By December 11, the Indian air-force with its 250 to 300 sorties a day as against a paltry ten Pakistani sorties, had established a near supremacy all along our western front and in the areas adjoining the border.

## INDIAN NAVY BLOSSOMS FORTH

Our Navy, which is the youngest arm of our forces, blossomed forth with its bold and dashing action in challenging the Pak Navy not only in their home waters but also within their very base at Karachi. The day after the outbreak of war, a task force of gun ships and rocket boats carried out a daring and well-timed attack on Pakistani warships on patrol outside Karachi and on Karachi harbour itself, creating absolute havoc in the area. In a brief spell, Pakistan's powerful destroyers *Khyber* and *Shah Jahan* and one of their mine sweepers were sunk. Most of the harbour installations were damaged and a large oil dump at the entrance was left burning.

A second task force from the western fleet carried out yet another raid on Karachi harbour four days later and attacked three enemy ships. This task force then went on to an offensive sweep off the Makaran coast, attacking many military targets in the area.

The eastern fleet too achieved notable successes. In the early hours of December 3, the crew of a destroyer on patrol at the entrance of Vishakhapatnam harbour detected a submarine by her sonar. It was promptly attacked with depth bombs and an explosion was heard, indicative of the destruction of a submarine. Conclusive evidence that it was Pakistan's largest submarine *Ghazi*, gifted to her by the Americans, became available only five days later.

From the aircraft-carrier *Vikrant* operating in the Bay of Bengal, aircraft flew several sorties every day against ships and harbour installations of Chittagong, Cox's Bazar, Khulna-Chalna-Mongla harbour complexes, in the Meghna estuary and on many other afloat and shore targets. In these attacks they sunk 12 gunboats and damaged many installations of military importance in all Bangla Desh harbours. The runway of Chittagong airport was sufficiently damaged to make it unserviceable for days.

The Navy's task was also to cut the maritime lines of communication of Pakistan which virtually amounted to the blockade of Pakistani and Bangla Desh harbours. Thus while our ports functioned normally, our Navy completely succeeded in cutting off the enemy's supplies by sea.

The enemy paid dearly for his aggression. Pakistani losses in equipment—aircraft, tanks, warships, submarines, gunboats, mine-sweepers—both in the eastern and western sectors were enormous. Her casualties—dead, wounded and missing—were very heavy. In Bangla Desh alone, over 93,000 of her officers, jawans and other personnel surrendered to our and Bangla Desh command, and were taken

prisoner of war. The huge quantity of arms, ammunition, tanks, vehicles and other military hardware which they lost in this theatre alone runs into millions of rupees. Pakistan's experience of 14 days of fighting, the loss of territory, and of manpower, together with the severe damage inflicted on equipment and installations should have convinced her of the disastrous consequences of armed aggression.

#### THE SIMLA AGREEMENT

With the cease-fire coming into effect from 2000 hours IST on Friday, December 17, 1971, India and Bangla Desh began exchange of views on their immediate problems, namely rehabilitation of the refugees and reconstruction of the shattered economy of Bangla Desh. The bulk of the refugees returned to their homes by the end of February 1972. Since the Prime Minister of India had declared that Indian armed forces would not remain in Bangla Desh any longer than was necessary, India took steps to their withdrawal, which was completed by the end of March 1972.

Meanwhile there was a change of government in Pakistan. The military junta which had brought so much misery and suffering on the people in Bangla Desh and Pakistan, was thoroughly discredited and it invited Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto to take over the Government of Pakistan. Mr. Bhutto had, a year earlier, been returned to the Pakistan National Assembly as the leader of the majority party in West Pakistan.

One of the first acts of Mr. Bhutto was to release Sheikh Mujibur Rahman from his detention in Pakistan. Sheikh Mujibur Rahman was given a tumultuous welcome in Dacca and in his first public speech in New Delhi, on his way there, he expressed his gratitude for the generous help extended by the people of India to Bangla Desh in her liberation struggle.

There, however, remained the main problem of restoring peaceful relations with Pakistan. India made it known from the beginning that it was against any third party mediation between India and Pakistan. On February 14, 1972 India in a letter to the U.N. Secretary-General offered to hold direct talks with Pakistan "at any time, at any level and without any preconditions." Later Mrs. Gandhi wrote to Mr. Bhutto suggesting emissary-level talks to prepare for a summit. At the same time she ruled out any third party mediation. Finally the emissary-level talks were held at Murree (Pakistan) on April 26, 1972. A joint statement, issued after four days of talks, announced that Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Bhutto would meet in Delhi towards the end of May or beginning of June.



But the schedule was not kept by Pakistan as Mr. Bhutto preferred first to go on a visit to North African and West Asian countries, presumably to solicit support for the stand he proposed to take at the summit. He wanted the prisoners of war to be repatriated, the territories taken by India in the war to be returned, and the right of self-determination conceded by India to the people of Kashmir.

However, the summit meeting did finally take place at Simla from June 28 to July 3, 1972. There were several deadlocks during the talks both at the official and summit level. The stumbling block, according to Mr. Bhutto, was Kashmir. When the talks were about to end in failure, Mrs. Gandhi and Mr. Bhutto met in a last minute attempt to save the summit. This resulted in the Simla Agreement between the two leaders signed on July 3, 1972.

In all the six clauses of the Agreement the emphasis is on the promotion of friendly and harmonious relationship between the two countries and the establishment of durable peace in the sub-continent. The two governments agree to settle all the differences between their respective countries by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations. They undertake to abstain from hostile propaganda directed against each other. Steps are to be taken to open trade, to exchange cultural missions and to resume communications between the two countries including over-flights.

In order to initiate this process of establishment of durable peace the two governments agree that Indian and Pakistani forces shall be withdrawn to their side of the international border within 30 days of the agreement coming into effect. But in Kashmir they would continue to remain at the new line of control, which the two sides will not try to change by force.

Finally the two governments agreed that another summit meeting be held in the near future to take up the question of repatriation of prisoners of war, final settlement of the question of Jammu and Kashmir and resumption of diplomatic relations.

The Agreement was hailed both in India and Pakistan as paving the way for an era of durable peace and goodwill in the sub-continent. The exchange of the instruments of ratification was completed on August 4, 1972 when the Agreement became effective.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE CULTURAL RENAISSANCE

THE MODERN period in Kashmir beginning with the advent of Sikh rule in 1819, ushered in an era of comparative peace, though there was political and economic suppression during the earlier stages. With a freer intercourse between the Valley and the Punjab, literature and art were again marked with influences from the south rather than the north-east—Afghanistan and Persia.

Persian, however, continued to be the court language for over a century more and we find several Persian scholars and poets in Kashmir attaining distinction.

### PERSIAN

One of the earliest poets in Persian was Mulla Baha-ud-din *Baha* (1766—1832 A.D.) who produced a *Khamsa* comprising *Rishi-nama*, *Sultani*, *Ghausiya*, *Naqashbandiya*, and *Chishtiya*. Baha's contemporary, Mulla Hamidullah, has given us a fascinatingly humorous poem, the *Chai-nama* in imitation of Zuhuri's *Saqi-nama*.

Give me tea, O Saqi, and let there be no delay ;  
Let me have it bitter, if milk and sugar are not to hand.  
Had Jamshid taken a draught from this pot,  
His slow beating pulse would have run like a deer.

Mirza Mahdi *Mujrim* (d. 1856) was a well-known poet and has been compared by several critics to Ghani on account of his forceful expression. Another Kashmiri poet in Persian during this period was Khwaja Hasan *Shiri*, of the family of Inayatullah Khan a former governor of the Mughal emperor Mohammad Shah. Born in 1808 A.D. *Shiri* migrated to the Punjab during the Sikh rule and thence went to Delhi where he had poetical contests with Mirza Ghalib.

The most popular poet in Persian during the early Dogra rule was Mirza *Mahdi* who besides being a learned scholar was also a poet of eminence. Given to fits of insanity, *Mahdi* composed couplets which at once convey praise and blame, eulogy and censure.

Of all the Kashmiri poets in Persian who lived in the rest of India, the name of Sir Mohammed Iqbal stands pre-eminent. His poetry is well-known to require any comments or introduction here.

Among the Kashmiri Hindus who acquired fame as poets in Persian during this period may be mentioned Raj Kaul Arzbegi *Dairi*, Shankar Ju Akhun *Girami*, Tabah Ram *Turki*. *Dairi* flourished in the time of Maharaja Ranbir Singh. Iranians coming to Kashmir were delighted to meet him and to listen to his poems and other compositions in Persian. Pandit Raja Kak Dhar *Farukh* was also a poet of note.

Diwan Kirpa Ram's *Gulab-nama* is perhaps one of the best biographical works in Persian. Written in high-flown style, it gives every detail of the life of Maharaja Gulab Singh, the founder of Jammu and Kashmir State.

### SANSKRIT

Sanskrit, however, continued to recede to the background, though Maharaja Ranbir Singh tried his best to revive its study. He founded Sanskrit *Pathshalas* and employed proficient Pandits to teach Sanskrit. He set up a translation bureau where Sanskrit texts were edited and sometimes translated into Persian, Hindi and Dogri. Sahib Ram, a noted Sanskrit scholar wrote his *Tirtha Sangraha* giving the legends and geographical description of the famous places of pilgrimage in Kashmir.

When in 1875 George Buhler visited Kashmir in search of Sanskrit manuscripts, he found the language popular with the Brahmans of Kashmir. Sanskrit learning, however, was not then as flourishing as during the earlier periods, but still there were some remnants of former glory. He met several Sanskrit scholars of the day, e.g. Pandit Daya Ram from whom Buhler says, "I obtained at once a great deal of valuable information." He also came in contact with Pandit Damodar, the Chief Pandit of the Maharaja's *Mudarissa*. Of this Pandit, Buhler says that he would be able to hold up his head anywhere. "His poetical compositions", says Buhler, "continuation of the *Rajatarangini*, and a letter-writer entitled *Praudalekha* which he was good enough to read and to explain to me for hours—certainly surpass Sri Harsha and Bana, and can be only compared to Subandhu's *Vasavadatta*". Buhler came in contact with other Pandits deeply learned in Sanskrit, notable being Govind Kaul and Damodar Jotshi. He found twenty-two libraries of Sanskrit manuscripts still extant in Srinagar.

Sanskrit literature produced in Kashmir during ancient times attracted the attention of several Indian and European scholars. The State Government established a Research Department, where many Sanskrit texts were edited, collated and published. The Pandits who laboured on these included Mahamahopadyaya Mukund Ram Sastri,



Pandit Hara Bhat Sastri, Pandit Jagadhar Zadu and Pandit Madhusudan Kaul. The latter, a great research scholar, edited with critical annotations and comments Abhinavagupta's *Tantralok* and other texts, which won him recognition and fame among Sanskrit scholars of the world.

## KASHMIRI

Kashmiri literature of the modern period starting with the beginning of the nineteenth century, was in the early stages dominated by Persian influences, Persian being the court language and the medium of polite literature. Both with regard to metre and language, the Kashmiri writers followed the models set by Persian poets and litterateurs. This had its advantage as well as drawbacks. Whereas the Kashmiri language benefited from the importation of words and idioms of this sweet language, it suffered from wholesale borrowings by the poets of the time, of not only epithets and phrases, but also "hackneyed imagery and figures of speech, conceits and insincere hyperbole of decadent Persian poetry." But often the Kashmiri poets strike an original conceit and breaking away from tradition describe a scene, or battle in words and phrases which can be called peculiarly Kashmiri. The themes which the Kashmiri poet turns to are typically Persian—the story of Laila and Majnun, of Shirin and Khusro and of Sohrab and Rustam.

From 1819 to 1880 when Parmanand died, productions in Kashmiri were both rich and prolific. To this period we owe the epics like the Ramayana by Prakash Ram, romances like *Shirin Khusro* by Mahmud Gami, *Gulrez* by Maqbool Shah Kralawari, tragedies like *Akanandun* and *Himal ta Nagray* by Walliullah and Saif-ud-din. Parmanand's rendering of Puranic and epic episodes like *Shiv-lagan* and *Sudama Charitra*, and numerous *ghazals* and ballads also come in the same period.

One of the earliest poets whose works follow the Persian metre, imagery and theme, was Mahmud Gami. Born in the village of Duru, near Verinag, Mahmud Gami was a prolific writer and produced in Kashmiri the *Panchganj*, i.e. the five well-known romances like *Yusuf Zulaikha*, *Laila-Majnun* and *Shirin-Khusro*. He has to his credit numerous *ghazals*, and other poems. His diction and description of battle scenes are virile and graphic. Though he uses Persian constructions, he has a true poetic quality of passion :

I asked of the butcher the meaning of love's art.

He said "Tie thy heart with the fork of Love.

It is the heat that makes the roasted meat taste better."

Prakash Ram of Kurigam village who lived during the time of the Afghan governor Raja Sukh Jiwan (1754-62), has given us the *Rama Avtar-charita* in Kashmiri. The simple metre, smooth flow and description of typical Kashmir landscape—flowers, seasons and dress of the people—make his great work delightful reading. True, there is a large number of Persian words and idioms, but the whole work is typically Kashmiri. Sita wears a *phiran* and *taranga*, the Dandaka forest is full of deodar, pine and poplar, Ravana's garden has beds of Kashmiri flowers, and the food of King Dasaratha and his court is rice and other Kashmiri vegetables. The numerous gods and goddesses who attend the marriage of Rama and Sita, have their abodes in the *tirthas* of Kashmir.

Similar pictures and descriptive passages are to be found in the works of Maqbool Shah Kralawari. Though the theme of his immortal metrical romance *Gulrez* is Persian, the scene is typically Kashmiri. He has also given us a frank satire on a Kashmiri farmer in his *Gruistnama*. Born in a village north of Srinagar, Maqbool Shah followed the calling of a priest and thus came in close contact with the peasants. An idea of the miserable conditions in which the peasant lived in his time, over a hundred years ago, can be had from his famous satire :

Thrashings, verily, have been ordained by Heavens for the peasant ;

Pull out the shoe and strike him on the head.

In a revealing piece, Maqbool depicts the peasants rushing out to greet a petty official, *Sazawal*, with pretended warmth :

If the *Sazawal* comes across them they run to greet him ;

They would knock away his fatigue with closed fists, shampoo his limbs and offer him a seat upon their heads.

In the field of lyrical poetry we find that Maqbool made a great name. He breathes freshness in his description of the Kashmir spring :

The trips to the Dal [Lake] have started in right earnest ;

The Shalamar [Garden] is in full bloom !

Pray call the friend of my youth to me today !

And he reveals the poignancy which overwhelms a frustrated lover's heart :

My youth was a half-awakened bud ;  
it fell off for his love.

Wanton and proud is he ; thence have I,  
and Beauty turned into dust.

Rasool Mir, born in Shahabad, was in fact a pioneer in maintaining the chastity of the Kashmiri language. His style is simple, direct and easily intelligible. His verses are sweet and charming. He is regarded as the father of Kashmiri *ghazal*, running in a well-knit form and pattern so distinct from the Persian and Urdu *ghazal*.

His lyrics are on the human plane, but he also wrote several mystical poems. His mysticism did not, however, prevent him from writing poems which show that he was sick of idleness and believed that progress of man was possible only by struggle and hard work :

Crave not for pearls while thou art on the shore,  
Dive deep into the depths of the sea,  
Make garlands of jewels and weave wreaths of pearls.

Parmanand has left a deep stamp of his mystic and humane thought on Kashmiri poetry, unsurpassed by any writer since. Born at Mattan near Anantnag in 1791 A.D., he lived to a ripe old age of 88, but his life was saddened by the death of his only son, and the naggings of his shrewish wife. He was, however, a saint and mystic and while performing the duties of a *Patwari* of the village as a means of earning the barest livelihood, he seems to have devoted his heart and soul to 'other worldly' affairs. He would meet religious mendicants who halted at Mattan for a few days while on their way to the cave of Amarnath. He listened to their discourses, and studied the broad principles of Vedanta. He came in contact with a Muslim mystic, Wahab Sahib, and listened to the recitations of the *Granth Sahib* at the Sikh Gurdwara at Mattan.

His poems are mainly religious and philosophical in theme. He is, however, less mystical and obscure than his great predecessor, Lalleshwari. He is less musical, familiar and realistic than his proximate successor, Pandit Krishanji Razdan and his own disciple Pandit Lakshmanji of Nagam, but he is far profounder than either. He is more accurate in the technique of versification than some of his contemporaries and predecessors.

The best-known works of Parmanand are *Sudama Charitra*, *Radha Swayamwar*, and *Shiv-lagan*. Thoroughly permeated with the teachings of Kashmir Saivism, his poems give a true interpretation of the philosophy, namely, that the Universe exists ; it is real, good ; it is *leela*, a dance of Siva. One must only know how to live and enjoy this real life :

To die while one is alive is excellent sport.  
It is meditation on one's self ;  
The contemplation of the Self apart from Ego.



The tradition of mystical verse was maintained by Aziz Darvesh, Wahab Khar, Mirza Kak and a number of known and unknown poets, but we notice a change in the idiom and phrase. We also find in this period the emergence of the *Rov* poems, turned to the rhythmic dance of the Kashmiri ladies. The socio-economic conditions of the time which bore heavily upon the people, produced the comic-satiric ballad, called "Lari Shah", expressing the Kashmiri's satiric humour.

By the end of the nineteenth century Kashmiri poetry had touched on all the themes and variations in metre and imagery. We have, for instance, the works of Abdul Wahab Pare which besides some didactic and devotional pieces, are mainly devoted to translations into chaste Kashmiri verse of Firdausi's *Shahnama*. In his *Akbarnama* he gives an epical versified account of the first three Afghan wars.

Abdul Wahab Pare, born at Hajin in 1845, was a prolific writer. His works embrace religious, didactic, satiric and amorous poems. His mystic poems have, however, been much appreciated, and his satiric odes are popular with the masses.

Ramzan Bhatt of Dharamunah village near Badgam, gave to the rich Kashmiri literature his immortal ballad, *Akanandun* (literally the only son) the Kashmiri version of the Issac and Abraham story, which is very popular with its keen, cruel pathos and devotional zeal. How forceful is the verse when the Sadhu appears to demand the life of the boy in fulfilment of a vow :

O Woman ! where is thy Akanandun ?  
Looking so bright among his classmates ?  
If you have the heart,  
Offer him in sacrifice today.

And how grim the murder scene :

Mother Ratna caught him by the hands and feet,  
Crying, O God, my God, O how cruel !  
His own father did cut his throat.

*Akanandun* is divided into seven parts. It is popular in the countryside. Though several poets including Ahad Zargar, Samad Mir and Ali Wani attempted to versify the story, none could reach the lucidity and clarity which Ramzan Bhatt was able to achieve.

Towards the end of the nineteenth century some notable contributions were made to the Kashmiri literature by European missionaries who in order to come closer to the people learnt their language. Particularly notable is Rev. T. R. Wade who compiled a Kashmiri grammar

and translated the New Testament into Kashmiri. Rev. J. Hinton Knowles collected a number of Kashmiri proverbs and riddles and published them along with English translations and notes and comments. Some additions to these were later published by Pandit Anand Koul in the *Indian Antiquary*. Knowles also published a collection of Kashmiri folk-tales in English. Another collection of folk-tales was published under the title *Hatim's Tales* by Sir Aurel Stein and Sir George Grierson. Sir George also translated from Sanskrit the Kashmiri grammar by Pandit Ishwar Kaul. A Kashmiri-Sanskrit Dictionary by the same author was utilized by Sir George in the preparation of his Kashmiri-English Dictionary, published in 1932 by the Royal Asiatic Society.

The beginning of the twentieth century found the Kashmiri literature in a state of stupor. The reason was not far to seek. The court language which had for centuries been Persian was suddenly changed to Urdu. There developed a keen desire among the middle classes to acquire a knowledge of Urdu and of the newly introduced English language. Kashmiri which had till then received inspiration from Persian was thrust into the background.

But with increasing literacy in Urdu and English, there grew a demand for literature that the masses could easily understand. The interest that the publication of Lalleshwari's sayings in 1920 aroused in Europe encouraged the young writers in Kashmir to devote more attention to their mother tongue. But times had now changed and the theme and form of the Kashmiri poetry required accordingly to be modified. That the new generation of Kashmiri poets did not ignore the modern trends is amply shown in the works of Ghulam Ahmad Mahjur who ushered in a new era in the cultural history of Kashmir.

Born in a middle class family of Pirs at the village of Matrigam in 1888, Mahjur had education in Persian and Arabic in a *Maktab*. Early in his youth he had an opportunity of travelling in the Punjab where he came in contact with writers and poets and this created in him a desire to compose poetry. He made the first attempts in this direction in Urdu, but this did not come up to his standard.

His profession as a *Patwari* brought him in close touch with the village folk. Their hopes and fears, their simple life and the hardships and miseries that they had to undergo in earning a meal for themselves and their children touched the chords of his sympathetic heart. In his simple Kashmiri verse, he voiced the inner feelings of the rustic and exhorted him to rise and work for his emancipation :

If thou wouldst rouse this habitat of roses,

Leave toying with kettle-drums

Let there be thunder-storm and tempest, aye an earthquake.

In his early poems Love predominates. But it is not the love of the rich, or of the tavern : it is of simple folk like a country lass. His poems too have a patriotic fervour and of the glory that was Kashmir. In his poem 'Our Country is a Garden' he describes the beauty of the Valley and relates some of the achievements of the Kashmiris in the past. He is a votary of Hindu-Muslim unity. To him Kashmir is a place where tolerance and communal amity are enshrined in the hearts of the people.

Hindus will keep the helm and Muslims ply the oars ;  
Let you together row ashore the boat of this country.

Mahjur was followed in his new themes and revolutionary ideas by Abdul Ahad Azad. Born of poor parents in a village called Rangar in 1903 A.D., Azad was brought up like other village lads and was taught the Quran and a few books in Persian. Later he studied Urdu. Azad was much influenced by his father's mysticism and his recitations from Maulana Rumi.

His early compositions are typical of those produced by Mahjur. But as he gained maturity, he enunciated the ways and means of attaining freedom from want and misery. Mahjur was a nationalist, but Azad longed for a socialistic pattern of society, for a new era of equality. The one looked to the past, the other to the future :

To become free, to end tyranny and to abolish superstition,  
This is my cherished dream, this my desire and this slogan.

Azad was a literary critic also and compiled a history of Kashmiri literature in Urdu.

Pandit Zinda Kaul, popularly known as 'Masterji', took to writing poems in Kashmiri at a late stage in his life. With his simplicity of habits and nobility of thought 'Masterji' was loved and respected by all the people of Kashmir. His poems are mystical, deeply devotional and patriotic. He employs new rhyme-schemes and rhythm patterns. His poems "Vadihe Manush" and "Natayoeri" are not only rich in content but in incantation and beautiful imagery as well.

Man—momently dying :

By hunger, cold and thirst oppressed,  
By disease distressed, by worry harassed,  
By fear and want and woe subdued,  
These sorrows over, by a hundred desires beguiled,  
His unsteady mind, nor finding rest in anything here,  
Still craves for a something unknown.



Masterji's lofty thought and rich imagery and the use of short and apt words and idioms, won recognition, and in 1955 the Sahitya Academy honoured him with an award for a collection of his poems entitled *Sumran*.

Mirza Ghulam Hassan Beg in his poem 'Kashmiri Craftsman' has touched a new theme, depicting the poverty and want of the producer of the beautiful handicrafts of Kashmir. His chief contribution is the *Rub'ai*, full of his peculiar wit and irony.

Kashmiri literature is deficient in prose and during the past few decades attempts have been made to write plays and short stories. The earliest play in Kashmiri was *Satach Kahwat* by Nand Lal Kaul. Many 'social reform' plays have been produced and during the Pakistan-inspired invasion of Kashmir, the members of the Cultural Front wrote and staged several plays depicting the basic principles for which Kashmir was fighting a defensive war.

The Cultural Front gave an impetus to the resurgence in the field of art and literature. The leaders of the new movement are Dina Nath Nadim and Rahman Rahi. The latter has received an award from the Sahitrya Academy.

Dina Nath Nadim, a teacher by profession, has rendered valuable service to Kashmiri by laying emphasis on prose. His essays and short stories published in *Kwang Posh*, a journal in Kashmiri, have laid a pattern which is being profitably followed by other young writers.

Among the new writers in Kashmiri may be mentioned Nand Lal Ambardar, Amin Kamil, Ghulam Ahmed *Mushtaq*, Pitambar Nath Dhar, Prem Nath *Premi*, and Dina Nath *Almast*. *Hairat* Pandani, an elderly writer and a Persian poet and scholar, attempted to produce verses in Kashmiri as well.

The beginning of the twentieth century also witnessed the emergence of Kashmiri authors who wrote in English. Foremost among them was Pandit Anand Koul who was one of the first few Kashmiris to learn English. He was associated early with Rev. Hinton Knowles in compiling the Dictionary of Kashmiri proverbs and riddles. Born in 1868, he studied Persian and Sanskrit and with his knowledge of English rose quickly to become the first President of the Srinagar Municipality. His interest in the history and literature of Kashmir never flagged and his books *Jammu and Kashmir State*, the *Kashmiri Pandit*, *Archaeological Remains in Kashmir* and *Lalla-Yogeshwari* are standard works on the subject. He also contributed extensively to research papers and journals in India and abroad on Kashmir history, folklore and literature.

Among other Kashmirian writers in English may be mentioned Ramchandra Kak, Jia Lal Kaul, Prem Nath Bazaz and Jia Lal Raina.

There are some Kashmiri writers in Urdu who have received recognition and fame. The foremost are Pandit Nand Lal Kaul *Talib* and Pandit Dina Nath Chikan *Mast*. Among other poets in Urdu may be mentioned Kamal-ud-din *Shaida*, Ghulam Rasool *Nazki*, Dina Nath *Dilgir*, *Shahzor* Kashmiri, Abdul Ahad *Barq*, and Nur Mohammad *Roshan*. Prem Nath *Pardesi* was a prolific writer in Urdu prose and Prem Nath Dhar has written a few short stories. Abdul Rehman Rahi and Som Nath Zutshi have also written a number of short stories in Urdu.

### PAINTING

In the field of art, Kashmir is not lagging behind. The Amar Singh Technical Institute, established at Srinagar in 1910, was responsible for creating among a few youngmen a taste for painting. But it was after 1931 due to the political upsurge that we find a number of artists coming into prominence. Dina Nath Wali's landscapes have been appreciated widely. Trilok Kaul and Ghulam Rasool Santosh have held exhibitions of their paintings in Delhi, Bombay and Calcutta and have received a good reception at the hands of art critics. P. N. Kachru, S. N. Butt, Mohan Lal Raina and Bansi Parimoo are artists of note.

In the field of architecture there is not much of note. Except for the new temple architecture of the Dogras who built the Rughnath temple at Jammu and several temples in Kashmir, most of the building activities were confined to the repairs and renovations of old monuments and Mughal gardens. Under the inspiration of the British tourists and officials, several bungalows of the English villa type were built. This introduced a new trend in the building art and we thus find a curious blend of the Muslim arch and the English steeple in some of the buildings in Srinagar.

With the establishment of popular government in 1947, there has been a palpable resurgence in the field of art and culture. The Cultural Academy is doing yeoman's service in reviving the cultural traditions and encouraging the growth and proliferation of new ideas and themes.





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